

[Proudhon (My Jean Baptiste)]

Pierre Cholet
OR THE Recovered
Kidnapped
Child



TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH
BY
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M. LE END, P. Q.
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PREFACE

IN the beginning of the month of February 1886, while I was chaplain at the convent of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd, 182 Fullum street, Montreal, a strange gentleman called upon me one day and said : "they tell me, Sir, that you write books." I modestly replied that I did so occasionally and he then added : "Well, father, I have been a lost child ; my father was Mr. Hyacinthe Cholet and my native parish was St. Policarpe. When only five years of age I was kidnapped and the early portion of my life was spent upon the sea. I finally managed to desert from my vessel and at once started out determined to find my parents ; an effort in which I was not successful until after ten long years of travel. My life was such an eventful one that I determined to write a short auto-biography. I brought it to a publisher, who, after submitting

it to a most careful examination, frankly told me that my composition was not worth reading. He however referred me to you, Sir, and I now have come to ask you if you would not kindly touch this up a little for me." The man's candour and simplicity at once struck me most forcibly and, after promising him that I would do what I could, I took his manuscript and told him to visit me again in three days.

I saw at a glance that there was enough matter to fill a small book, and what was more that it was altogether original, comprising the most romantic adventures and touching reverses of fortune, something after the style of St. Genevieve of Brabant, but with this difference, that the story of Canon Schmid was merely a fable, while the narration of Mr Choïet was the plain, unvarnished truth.

Meanwhile, on February 17th, I was appointed curate at Ile Bizard. The troubles and embarrasements attending my installation, the different occupations which devolved upon me as pastor, the increase in work, generally, which a jubilee year brings on, and the other literary efforts to which I had to put the finishing touches had the effect of preventing me

from giving any attention to the manuscript of the lost child, and the result was that it lay in my library untouched. Finally, in the month of November, I managed to devote a little time to the work. At once I saw the sequel fairly swarmed with errors and omissions and what was more that many of the events were not at all well worked in together ; in fact they were the most crude of narratives, such as one will find written by those who have no knowledge whatever of literary style. At times when, at a loss to find the proper words to express minute details, he almost passed them over, and yet it was in these very details, handled and developped as they were, that there lay all the charm of the work.

I sent for Mr. Cholet, and he passed ten days with me at my pastoral residence. I questioned him at very great length ; in fact I fairly puzzled him with questions. He gave an exact account of all the peculiarities and phases of his eventful existence. The errors and omissions were corrected or filled in ; his narratives assured a more connected form, his adventures became imbued with new life, and everything appeared more simple and pungent as told by himself than they did in his manuscript. Then

I was in a position to start to work, being free as to how I should proceed, possessed of a full knowledge of the facts, and without being hampered continually by insolvable problems or incomplete data.

In the month of March of this year, 1887, when the work was complete, I asked Mr Cholet to visit me before handing over the copy to the printers. With pen in hand I read him the entire volume, correcting any little errors which, through oversight might have occurred. So I can say that, with the exception of the few foot notes which appear, the book does not contain a single idea which originated in my own brain. The frank and open countenance of the hero of this story, his manner so full of simplicity, his natural timidity and the correctness with which the different parts of his narrative coincided—all these facts combined to dispell any supposition that the man was an imposter. I visited St. Malo where he said he spent his boyhood days ; I travelled along the coasts of Labrador and the Baie des Chaleurs, where he wandered after his invasion, and on several occasions I subjected him to a more rigid and minute cross-examination on the geographical and topographical features of

these places, but he always came out of the ordeal with honor.

In the course of the summer, while on a visit to the curate of St. Polycarpe, I called upon Mr. and Mrs. Cholet. The father was absent but I was struck by the wonderful resemblance which existed between mother and son in the cast of the features, the complexion of the skin and especially in the tone of the voice. The good woman was convinced that God, in his goodness, had brought her son back to her. "There is not a single one in the family," she said, "who doubts it." Her details and explanations both regarding the kidnapping of little Pierre and his return tallied perfectly with those which I had written in my book.

I found the certificate of baptism of the child Pierre Cholet, and his age was the same as that which Mr. Cholet to-day gives. Here is the document in full. "This fourth day of October, one thousand eight hundred and forty, we the undersigned priest baptized Pierre, born, the twenty eight day of last month, of the legitimate marriage of Hyacinthe Cholet, farmer of this parish, and Angelique André dit St-Amand. god-father, Pierre André dit

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St-Amand, god-mother, Justine Cholet, who, as well as the father, could not sign.

T. BRASSARD, Priest.

I then wrote a circular letter to a number of well-to-do persons, who resided near Mr. Hyacinthe Cholet at the time of the kidnapping and who were worthy of confidence. Their replies all confirmed the story of our hero. Here are a few of the letters in all their charming simplicity.

Mr. HYACINTHE CHOLET : " I the undersigned, Hyacinthe Cholet, father of Pierre Cholet, once a lost child, certify that on the 7th of July, 1845, one Friday afternoon, my two sons Pierre and Toussaint, together with Pierre Doucet, the son of a neighbor of mine, disappeared from home, unknown to me, just after a peddler had passed, who I believe made them some promises. We immediately started to look for them and with the aid of the neighbors searched everywhere but without success. The following Sunday Rev. Mr. Robert, the then curate at St. Polycarpe, only said a low Mass and recommended all his parishioners to aid in the search. Over five hundred persons complied with his request and

began to scour the woods. From time to time the old bell, which was utilized to guide us in the forest would ring out its slow doleful tolls to warn us against separating from one another. During fifteen consecutive days we kept up a diligent search, pushing our way as far as Beauharnois and Chateauguay but we never met with any better success. Finally we abandoned all hope of succeeding and became overcome with grief. Thirty five years later, in September 1880, Pierre was found. In proof of which I affix my signature. "

Mme. ANTOINE DOUCET, mother of Pierre Doucet, who was kidnapped when six years of age, at the same time as his cousin, Pierre Cholet. " I certify that my son was lost under the same circumstances, and was looked after with the same diligence as mentioned in the letter of Mr. Hyacinthe Cholet, which has just been read to me. It would be useless for me to attempt to depict to you the grief with which I was afflicted at the time that such a misfortune befell me ; suffice it to say that I remained inconsolable for thirty five years and that I was only comforted when I heard from the lips of Mr. Pierre Cholet how my poor little son died. "

Mr. ISAIAH HAMELIN: " I was one of those who made up the party that searched for the lost children. As soon as I was apprized of their disappearance I started, with their parents, to look for them, and then willing people came from all sides to aid us in our mission. At that time the woods were large but we arranged ourselves in line, about five feet apart, and started through it. Some of us carried guns which were occasionally discharged, while others were provided with speaking trumpets. This, augmented by our calls and shouts, served to create a din, which lasted throughout the day and far into the night, and when it became dark, we burned fires at different places. We scoured the woods from one end to the other, taking our meals at whatever houses we came across, and kept up our steady and diligent search during fifteen days. If my memory serves me right, this occurred forty two years ago. It created such intense and widespread grief at the time that I could never forget it. "

Mme. ISAIAH HAMELIN, Sophia Cédilot :
“ When the little children were lost I was stopping with a neighbor of Mr. Hyacinthe Cholet, and saw how they were brought up during the time they lived with their parents. They were missed one afternoon but their mothers thought they had gone to pick berries. During the day a little peddler came along and Madame Cholet priced some of his goods but did not buy anything. This evidently displeased the peddler as he said to her “I’ll make you remember me.” At that time the mother did not pay much attention to the absence of her children but when nightfall came and they did not return she became anxious. Mr. Antoine Doucet, father of the boy, Doucet, who disappeared with the two little Cholets, called to me from his house and asked if the children were at my place. Although they were in the habit of playing about my residence, they were not there that afternoon and I answered him in the negative. Inquires were then made among the different neighbors but no one had seen the children. Mr. Antoine Doucet even went to the residence of his brother, Pierre Doucet, at Rivière à Delile, thinking that they might have wandered thither

but he returned alone. The two mothers then burst into tears and wept bitterly. We started out in company with the other neighbors and began a search for the little ones. Later on the same evening my father returned from the lake and said to us when he entered : " I don't know what's up on the hillside ; every one is running about bareheaded crying out about something." We then told him about the children being lost. "

Mr. HONORÉ LAUZON : I, the undersigned, certify that on the recommendation of Rev. Mr Roux, curate of St. Joseph des Cèdres, I left there for the parish of St. Polycarpe, which was then quite small, to aid in the search for the three children who had been lost, viz : Pierre Cholet, Toussaint Cholet and Pierre Doucet ; that was in the month of July 1845. "

Mr. AUGUSTIN BÉLANGER : I certify that I assisted in the search for the children ; I heard the bell ringing the alarm of distress and can remember that the band of searchers, of which I formed part, comprised no less than two hundred men. The last time that I saw the children, the day they disappeared, they were all

three on the roadside passing the time making mud pies. Mr. Pierre Giroux was with me.

Mr. RODGER DUCKETT, postmaster of Coiteau-Station : " I remember very well that, in 1845, three children named Cholet and Doucet were lost at Côte de Ste. Marie, St. Polycarpe parish ; that I heard the bell of the parish church ringing, undoubtedly to summon everybody to aid in the search ; and that my father sent his men to form part of the search party. "

Mr ANTOINE GIROUX : " I am an old inhabitant, who have never left the place, and am the fourth neighbor of Mr. Hyacinthe Cholet. When the children were lost we began searching on the south side of the hill, coming around later to the north side. More than four hundred persons marching in line at a distance from each other of about four feet conducted the search for more than fifteen days. "

But these will suffice for such quotations. I could multiply them almost without limit. From what precedes, however, it is to be concluded, I believe, that this story is not mere fiction nor a simple tale, nor even what we might call an historical romance but plainly and un-

controvertibly an exact recital of real events, without coloring or dissimulation. I scrupulously obtained from either adding to, or deducting from, the naked truth, having no desire to appeal to the emotions of an over-excitable imagination, and feeling fully convinced that the simple statement of these sad adventures would prove sufficient to appeal to and touch all hearts.

I have even left the words of the hero, himself, contenting myself simply with developing the facts and assuring myself that the phraseology was grammatically correct. I even deemed it proper to let him retain throughout his tale several French Canadian expressions and I hope, kind reader, that you will not feel displeased with me for not having deprived the narrative of that local color which designates its emanation from the Laurentian hills. Yet for the benefit of those strangers who will not be able to seize the meaning of such words I have given in a series of short foot notes the explanation or origin of such expressions.

Dear reader, be indulgent with me ; for your recreation I have frequently worked far into the night, and if you find any errors in

these pages do not be too severe on me. It is an author's desire to make all corrections as the leaves of his book come from the printers, but when my book will be printed I will be far away from here, traversing, in company with Mgr. Lorrain, the wild forests between the province of Quebec and Hudson's Bay.

Given at St. Raphael of l'Isle Bizard, this 24th day of May 1887, Jubilee year of Queen Victoria, and feast day even more solemn of Mary, Queen of angels and of men. *Auxilium christianorum, ora pro nobis.*

J. B. PROULX. Priest.





PIERRE CHOLET

OR

THE RECOVERED KIDNAPPED CHILD

CHAPTER I

HOW I WAS TAKEN AWAY.

§ I

AT HOME.

MY name is Pierre Cholet. I was born in 1840. My father's name was Hyacinthe Cholet and my mother's Marie St-Amand.

I first saw the light of day on St. Mary hills, St. Polycarpe, Soulanges County. Our house was situated about a league from the church and was the second from the

school-house. I was kidnapped at the age of five years or rather, to be more precise, when I was just four years, nine months and ten days old, together with my little brother, Toussaint, aged a little over three years, and a little cousin, Pierre Doucet, aged six years. I thought so frequently, when in strange lands, of my kidnapping that I can remember all the details the same as if it occurred only yesterday.

It happened during the summer, on July 7th. 1845, according to what I have since been told. About ten o'clock, after returning from the raspberry bushes, my brother and I entered the house and asked mama, who was rushing in and out of the house, all intent on business, for a piece of bread and butter. She told me to wait a minute but, I continued asking for it in a whining sort of a way. She then gave me a little slap, saying, "Clear out of this, you little brat." I got angry and pulling off my little frock coat threw it on the ground.

"All right" I replied, "I will go and never come back again" (1).

§ II

AMONG THE BERRY BUSHES.

I looked out of the window to see if I could not get a glimpse of my cousin, who lived on the other side of the road, and as I did so he just came out of the house. I joined him quickly and soon my little brother, Toussaint, came running after us crying out, "Wait for me, wait for me." We stopped and when he came up to us we noticed that he had a piece of bread and butter,

(1) It is not altogether useless to recall this little incident. Madame Cholet, as frequently happens with all tender hearted mothers, after her child was kidnapped, severely reproached herself for administering that little slap, which brought about the loss of her son. She spoke to no one of this little incident, but concealed her anguish within her own breast, and when, thirty five years afterwards, Pierre returned and he, himself, remembered the event it was for her a strong proof of his identity. If he had not been her son, how could he have found out this circumstance which she had so carefully concealed herself. †

which he divided with us. We then started out, following at first the main road, to look for berries on the ground of the second neighbor of Mr. Doucet. We kept close to the fence along the line which leads, toward the west, in the direction of the land around Rivière-à-Delile. At that time the lands of the parish were not as extensively tilled as they are to-day, for, not very far from the houses, could be seen bushes and brambles and the blackened and half burned stumps of felled trees. We amused ourselves for a long time, on the borders of a creek, cutting down cat-tails, when suddenly we saw a man approaching, carrying a bag upon his back. Thoroughly frightened we wanted to run away, but he cried out to us to stop. "What are you doing there, my little fellows," he said? "We are playing, sir." "Well come here," he added, "and I will show you some pretty playthings." We looked at one another first in astonishment and then with fear, but suddenly

Come here, that I may show you beautiful toys (page 3).



plucked up courage enough to say to ourselves : " Let us go and see that box he has on his back. " The man put his bag upon the ground and allowed us to examine all the toys. Finally he said " Come to my wagon and I will show you something even more pretty." We walked a good distance, Pierre Doucet and I, hand-in-hand, and feeling happy, while little Toussaint, who had considerable difficulty in following us, was crying bitterly.

The wagon was surmounted by a large box after the style of bakers' and peddlers' carts. In front of the box, just behind the horse, sat an old woman and a little girl about six years of age. " Get inside," the little peddler said to us, "and I will bring you to your parents " We had no desire to do this and began to cry but he caught hold of us and lifted us into the wagon. After a while Pierre Doucet said : " Our house seems a long way off." "Yes, yes," replied the peddler, "but we are getting near there now. Are you going to sleep?"

"No," said Pierre, "We want to get out, put us on the ground." Toussaint, meanwhile, was almost crying his eyes out. The peddler became enraged ; he stopped his horse abruptly and swearing like an unchained devil hustled us into the large box, which contained old iron and rags. Then he whipped up his horse, which started off at a rapid gait, the sudden shock causing our heads to strick hardly against the side of the box. Almost immediately afterwards Toussaint fell asleep but Pierre and I did nothing but cry all the way.

Who was it that kidnapped us ? In the morning a peddler had passed our way with a wagon something after the style which I have described. Mrs. Doucet, mother of Pierre, who was at our house, caused him to unroll some of his merchandise and then told him she did not want anything at all. He became offended but the women only laughed at him. Then he said " You will remember me before

night." Could it be possible that, seeing us playing about the house, he decided to choose us for his victims and the tools with which to revenge himself? It is very probable ⁽¹⁾.

Had we been kidnapped on St. Mary hill, where our parents resided, or had we, while amusing ourselves, followed the fence along the road as much as the length of two properties, about six acres, to the side of the Rivière-à-Delisle? What time of the day was it when the little peddler enticed us to his wagon? These are so many questions for which my indistinct memory can find no answers. All that I can say is that we were a pretty long time away from home and that we had walked a good distance.

§ III

ON AN ISLAND.

WE travelled for the rest of the day and all night without stopping. At day

(1) See the letters of Mr. Hyacinthe Cholet and Madame Isaïe Hamelin in the preface.

break we came to a halt and got out on a desert shore and were terribly hungry. The peddler placed me in a canoe saying : "Keep very quiet until I go to the wagon to get your little companions." Little Doucet cried out to me "Pierre, Pierre, where are you ?" Between my sobs I answered, "Oh ! where are our parents ?" The little peddler then said to us, menacingly : "Shut up, you, shut up at once." This only made Doucet cry out more loudly and the peddler hit him on the head saying : "Keep quiet, that is enough of crying for nothing." Pierre kept quiet for a moment and I said to my little brother : "Don't cry, for if you do the man will beat you." He stopped but he snuffled a great deal. The three of us were lying in the bottom of the boat, the woman and the little girl were squatted in the bow and the man himself in the stern. He said to us : "Console yourselves, you will soon be with your parents" "Are we going home ?" asked little Doucet. "Yes, you are going home," returned

the peddler. "It is a very long way off" I added. And I lifted my head just the least bit to look. As I did so, however, the peddler yelled at me in an enraged tone: "Hide yourself." We landed on an island, not a very large one, and the side we were on was covered with bushes, bulrushes and tall weeds. We remained here three days, under a tent, with the old woman and little girl, the man being absent all that time. We slept at nights under buffalo robes. The woman did the cooking in the open air on a temporary stove made of stones, while we, totally forgetful of our misfortune, amused ourselves by gathering wood to keep the fire going. I often ask myself now where that island could have been situated. Was it at the foot of Lachine Rapids, or was it at the foot of the island of Montreal on the way to Boucherville? In our uninterrupted journey of a day and a night we could have easily reached either one or the other place. All that I can remember is that it was not large, that it was without any tall trees and

that the main land was a good distance away

§ IV

ABOARD AN OCEAN STEAMER.

WHEN the peddler returned, it was dark. He put us in a canoe and we crossed to a sandy shore where we got out, leaving the woman and little girl behind. We wanted to amuse ourselves by gathering shells, but he rudely prevented us. He put Toussaint on his shoulders and took Pierre Doucet and myself by the hand. Doucet began to cry and the peddler halted abruptly: "Are you going to stop your crying, yes or no?" he asked. Pierre stopped for two or three minutes but then broke out again even worse than before. "Either you'll stop your crying," said the peddler, "or you'll get something to cry for." So saying he put Toussaint on the ground and secur-

ing a switch, gave Pierre three or four sound cracks across the shoulders saying : "Now you will shut up, you good for nothing little brat ? "

The peddler then brought us to a house where there was only a woman, and we slept there two nights. She gave us supper, but Pierre only took a mouthful ; he said he was sick. It was not so with my brother and I ; we had good appetites and besides we were younger and did not think so much, as did our little cousin, of our misfortune.

The following morning the peddler, in company with two big tall men, came to see us. They examined us without speaking and we were afraid of them. They returned the same evening and put on each of us a blue suit. The little peddler told us to henceforth follow the two strangers. He had sold us and was handing over his merchandise. These two men brought us to a boat, which contained five sailors. It was as dark as pitch and it was raining in torrents.

After navigating about for a good length of time we boarded a large vessel on which there were about fifty men.

The captain was very old and his beard was silvery grey. He let us rest ourselves in his cabin and questioned us at great length about our fathers, mothers and other relatives. Little Doucet began crying and he said to him : " Don't cry, little lad, I am going to give you some candies and apples." Pierre kept quiet for the rest of the night.

The son of the captain, who was second in command, asked us our names. He then said to Pierre Doucet : " Henceforth you shall call yourself Pierre Marin " ; to me : " You shall call yourself, Louis Marin," and to Toussaint : " You shall call yourself Toussaint Marin." I will remember this circumstance, when they gave us new names under which we were known afterwards. We forgot our real names and it was only several years later that I found out I was called Cholet, and my little cousin, Doucet.

§ V.

FRUITLESS SEARCHES.

BUT let us return for a moment to the parental domicile and consider what was going on there. These details, however, as can easily be imagined, I only became acquainted with on my return to St. Polycarpe, where I found my parents. Our mothers only became aware of our disappearance late in the afternoon and their first move was to rush around to the neighbors' houses, expecting to find us in some one of them, but they were naturally astonished when they met with disappointment. Some of them had no information whatever to give concerning us, while others could only say that they had seen us on the road side, amusing ourselves in making little mud pies. The father of Pierre Doucet, about sunset,

proceeded to his father's residence at Rivière-à-Delisle, thinking that we might have wandered off that distance, but he returned discouraged. The two bereaved families, with the assistance of some of their neighbors, lost no time in organizing search parties and the woods were scoured in expectation of finding us. The night passed and all the following day, which was Saturday, but although they searched assiduously and cried out our names continuously, their labors proved fruitless. The next day, Sunday, the curate of St. Polycarpe, Rev. Mr. Robert, only said a low mass, and announced from the pulpit that there would be no vespers; but he exhorted his congregation to join with the afflicted parents in their search for us. Rev. Mr. Roux, of The Cedars, instructed his parishioners likewise. Hundreds of persons assembled on St. Mary hill. At first they traversed the fields and woods, which extended to the south of the concession on the shore of Rivière-à-Delisle, and then the lands to the north

in the vicinity of the domain (1) of Mr. de Beaujeu.

The party advanced in one extended line, after the style of an army drawn up for battle, only each man was about four or five feet from his neighbor, so that no path might be passed unnoticed, no quiet retreat not visited and no thicket not thoroughly searched. The church bell was kept ringing continuously to guide the little children if they were still alive and to prevent the searching party from losing themselves in the forest, which at that time was very dense. Some discharged fire-arms, others utilized horns, and the echo of this continual din could be heard from one end of the parish to the other. These searches were kept up in this way for fifteen days and were even pushed into the neighboring parishes. At first they were anxious to find us alive, but when this hope was dashed to the ground, they would have been glad

(1) The term "domain" is used to designate that part of a seignory occupied by the seigneur himself.

enough to have come across our cold remains in order to inter them in consecrated ground and thus put an end to that uncertainty and unrest which afflicted our parents. Our mothers, especially, were inconsolable. "If they had only drawn their last breath in their beds," they used to say, "we could the more easily submit to the will of God. Alas! did they die after great suffering? Were they devoured by wolves or did they become food for birds of prey. Oh, cruel incertitude which is slowly breaking our hearts!.."

It was for them a pang which they could never entirely efface from their memories. Long years afterwards, when, the only one of the three lost children, I returned to my native place I found that the wound still remained unhealed in the bottom of their hearts (1).

(1) For further details see in the Preface, the letters of Mesdames H. Cholet, I. Hamelin, R. Duquette, A. Bélanger, A. Giroux, H. Lauzon, also those of Messrs. P. Doucet, and I. Hamelin.

§ VI

A TRIP OVER THE OCEAN.

MEANWHILE we were on our way to France. In all probability we remained for a few weeks in the gulf of St-Lawrence, where our vessel had interests in connection with the fisheries.

My little brother and I had become more gay, being totally ignorant of the greatness of our misfortune. Little Doucet did not care to eat and soon became seriously ill. He lingered for several days in his hammock and then after a short but painful sickness he expired. When he was dead, the Captain's son said to us "Come and see us throw your little friend into the sea." They placed his body on a long plank, from which they launched him into the briny waves, and Pierre Doucet disappeared forever from

view. I was holding Toussaint by the hand and I began to cry. "Shut up," said Captain's son to us, "for we will do the same thing with you." The Captain called us into his cabin and gave us all the cakes and candies we wanted. His object was to console us in our loss and children of five years of age can become quickly reconciled. I forgot for the time my little friend, but some years later when my intelligence was more developed his image loomed up in my dreams and I regretted his loss. How I would gladly share with him to-day my good fortune ! The old Captain heaped toys and weeties upon us and amused himself with us. He was a kind father to us, but his son was no counterpart of him, and was in the habit of slapping us and pulling our ears when his father was asleep. One day while he was thus abusing us his father said to him : " Stop that, what harm have they one you ? " " They are disturbing every thing on the bridge," the son replied, but the father

simply said : " they are only doing just as you did when a little child. "

The good old Captain fell sick in his turn and the news soon spread that he could not live long. Every body on board ship was astonished and all the sailors spoke only in whispers. He sent for his son and said to him : " God calls me to him; take good care of these two little boys and do not abuse them."

He called me to his side. " Louis, said he, I have something to tell you, I suppose you are aware that I am not your father, but if you are not I will tell you, because you can understand better than your little brother. It was some men whom I do not know, who kidnapped you. They brought you to me and sold you. I have often pitied you both. I trust that God will not punish me too severely for that action, for the robbery was not mine. Come closer to me, dear Louis, that I may kiss you. Love your brother well ; heed my son, and be a good boy. Come and kiss me, you too, Toussaint. He

then began crying and we wept also. Some days afterwards the Captain died and we brought his remains to St. Malo, where he formerly resided. We regretted his loss very much, for he had been very kind and tender to us, little orphans.

May God have mercy on his soul.



CHAPTER II.

HOW THE YEARS OF MY CAPTIVITY WERE PASSED.

§ I

MY EDUCATION.

Y brother and I spent our boyhood days at St. Malo under the care of an elderly gentleman named Cottin. He was brother of the Captain who died at sea, as also uncle of the first mate; which latter became Captain in the place of his father. His house stood opposite the dock a little outside the city. We

remained with him for a space of eight or nine years during which time he treated us in a very kind manner, though his aged spouse was an extremely cross old lady.

His occupation consisted in teaching twenty small boys. Seven or eight of those belonged, as did ourselves, to the company and were lodged in his house ; the others consisting of the sons of officers on board remained outside joining us during class hours only. We were closely watched ; not being allowed to cross the limits of the playground, except for the purpose of visiting the vessels when they happened to be in port. It frequently occurred that we dined and slept on board. But twice only during the space of eight years did I chance to enter the city, and then under the supervisor of old Cottin. Now and then the Captain would come to see us and make inquiries concerning our health and progress.

The school curriculum comprised, in addition to reading, a certain amount of spelling, arithmetic, geography and our

catechism. I received my first Communion on board one of the Company's steamers from the hands of the Rev. Mr. Arpin, the Chaplain on board. Occasionnally we went to hear mass on the ship's deck, but never within the city churches. We were little prisonners in all the force of the term. Our abduction from home was a thing already known to us. Certain remarks now and then falling from our guardians pointed to Canada as the residence of our parents ; but neither then nor later did we dare speak about the subject to the Captain, well aware that it would be most unwelcome.

§ II

SHIPRECKED FOR THE FIRST TIME.

When I was between fourteen and fifteen years of age and my brother between thirteen and fourteen we set out upon length voyages encountering

much hardship therein. Seafaring was a more difficult task for my brother than for me for he was not endowed with as much strength as I and was less accustomed to hard knocks ; for, be it known, that in the first days of our navigation we received more blows than bread. Cleaning knives, washing dishes, sweeping the deck, blacking boots and climbing the rigging filled up our daily round of duty. We shed tears enough than the Company possessed a great number of ships which it was accustomed to rent ; some to the government for transportation of troops, others to merchants for the conveyance of their goods, while others were destined to companies interested in cod fishing. Ours, laden with provisions and fishing nets was commissioned to protect the French fishing stations near the bank of New-Foundland by keeping out of French water American vessels and those of Nova Scotia and prevent them from taking *capelan* used for bait. We set sail amid the shouts of applause on shore and



A sailor cried out to Toussaint : " Make haste ! make haste ! " (page 25).



the roaring of cannon on board. This was on the first of April. Towards the 17th we were wrecked a short distance from Pic-tou during a violent gale from the south-west and a heavy snow storm. The Captain summoning all the crew ordered them to lower the sails with despatch. But his words come too late, for already the ship was upon the rocks, the beams bursting in every quarter. He called upon the saints to protect his cargo. On every side was heard the cry : " we are lost, we are lost. " Many betook themselves to the water as girdled with life preservers.

In an instant the five jolly boats are lowered. The first ready to start with twelve men is submerged by an advancing wave and all are lost. The captain cries out for me to enter his boat. A sailor was obliged to warn Toussaint three times to make haste and then the poor fellow dropped himself into the craft loudly bewailing. Mountains of waves were rolling about, we rowed with all our might. When about three acres from land we were lift-

ed upon the crest of a long wave which at one bound brought us upon the shore. Jumping upon the sands up to the waist in water we managed to push our boat upon the shore. Thanks to God the others also were saved. There we were shivering upon a lonely shore for from any place of habitation.

The crew numbered fifty five men, forty three had escaped ; twelve bodies floating into the shore were all that remained of the others. With heavy hearts we gathered the remains of our unhappy comrades. They were deformed beyond recognition and their bodies torn to shreds by cruel sharp pointed rocks. They formed a sad sight indeed to behold. We had much difficulty in preparing their graves, having no other means of digging than our hands and a sharp pointed stick. We were penetrated with cold and our hearts bursting with grief.

This painful duty terminated, our kind captain suggested that we should endeavor to get sight of some vessels that

might perchance appear in the neighborhood. As eight men were to enter a boat we perceived a vessel veering a point out in the distance. "Make haste, make haste," exclaimed the captain, "Strain every muscle to reach it." Signals were hoisted and soon answered by the ships steaming towards us. On approaching the captain begged a passage for himself and his crew adding that we had been shiprecked during that morning's storm and cast ashore without any relief whatever. Captain Duquet, (such was his name) was easily persuaded to take us on board but announced that being short of provisions he would be compelled to put us on short rations. During the nine days we remained upon his vessel, our diet was limited to a few ounces of salt beef in the evening, but we were kindly treated otherwise. Captain Duquet belonged to Quebec.

The following year, whilst on his way to Brazil with a consignment of codfish his ship went down with all on board.

May God reward him for hi skindness to us.

Ten days later in mid-ocean we met an English vessel bound for Boston. We went on board the ship where surrounded with an abundance of everything we feasted like kings. On landing at St. John, Newfoundland, we took a French vessel for St. Malo. As you may easily perceive my first voyage was far from being an excursion of pleasure. It was, however, but the forecast of a still more gloomy future.

§ III

MY NUMEROUS SUBSEQUENT VOYAGES.

CAPTAIN Cottin entered Toussaint as a boarder in a school in the city of St. Malo. As yet he was too weak to bear the drudgery of a seaman's life and was moreover disposed to be sickly. Though not very stoutly built I stood five feet ten

inches ; Toussaint without being as tall was more thickly set than I. He remained three years at college and left with a very good education.

I was obliged, however, to embark for China. I was ever following in the steps of Captain Cottin, now attaching self to one of the Company's vessels, now to another and the rest of the crew did likewise. This time we had a cargo of dry goods and liquor for the Chinese and were to bring back a consignment of tea. My thoughts were ever reverting to Toussaint, the inseparable companion of my youth. On retiring late at night I was accustomed to shed a tear over the happiness we once enjoyed together. Now each moment was filled with toil ; I was obliged to take part in gun exercise with the other sailors, was a boatman, and in the event of a serious assault was sure to be engaged.

During the ten years I was under Captain Cottin, I made many a voyage. I sailed to Jamaica with flour bringing back

sugar and molasses, to the banks of Newfoundland and Labrador to protect the French fishing stations, to Boston and Portland U. S., to Liverpool, Eng., to Bordeaux and La Rochelle France.

§IV

SHIPRECKED FOR THE SECOND TIME

IN the autumn of 1869 we embarked at St. Pierre Miquelon for Quebec on a vessel laden with fish. In addition to Captain Cottin there were thirteen sailors on board. At Bic we took a pilot and as the wind was favorable we spread all our canvas. It might have been seven o'clock in the evening, the next morning we cast anchor in front of the Quai des Indes.

As the season was advanced we made haste to discharge our cargo and reload with sawn timber, boards and planks. We set sail on All Saints Day. How near had I drawn to my home and was now

leaving without any hope of returning ! Toussaint and I entertained a vague notion that our parents resided somewhere in the neighborhood and this thought filled us with sadness.

A breeze was blowing from the South-West, the shipyards stretched every inch of sail and our journey continued pleasant till we reached the spot where the pilot was sent ashore.

Three days later the wind veered south accompanied by a violent snow storm. It was impossible to round the south of New-Foudland, and in spite of ourselves we ere compelled to enter the Straits of Belle Isle. The more it blew the faster fell the snow. Only a slight portion of our sail was set. One morning the Captain ordered the first mate to steer for the Cape. That night was a sleepless one for us. Next day a foot of snow covered the deck and the rigging stiff and inflexible was encased in an inch of ice ; what a difficult task it was to carry out our duty under those circumstan-

ces ! About four in the afternoon the wind changed to south west. The Captain was pacing the stem, with hands thrust in his pockets anxiously scanning the horizon. " The day is closing " he exclaimed, " night is coming on, the current is against us, I have lost my way and our compasses are all deranged. If the good Virgin would favor us with the presence of the sun but for one hour, we could escape all danger ; but it is not to be, the storm is master, what will become of us " How could we escape discouragement ?

Toussaint was seated on the fore part of the vessel on the lookout. Suddenly he exclaims " Right near I see a dark object " pushing up the first mate, cries out " a reef ! a reef ! " the Captain follows distracted. " Alas, my fears have proved true " were the words elicited from him by the scene.

In another moment the vessel mounts upon a large rock, splits in two, is half filled with water and becomes firmly fixed.



The rock upon which we had stranded was several acres in area. With much difficulty we saved one of our boats. The hour might have been midnight. Dense flakes of snow were falling and the waves continued to roll about like hills. The Captain decided to withhold till daybreak any attempt to go ashore. We spent a cheerless night trembling beneath the cold and with the sleet beating against our force.

Next morning the snow was still descending but the wind had almost ceased and the sea was becoming more calm. The first mate set out with nine sailors for the hore which could be seen eight or nine miles away ; the boat had been filled to its utmost. Two of us remained on board namely, the captain, my brother and I together with two others, Asselin and Santerre. " As soon as you reach a place of habitation, send us relief " — " we will, good day." — " A pleasant journey to you and good luck !" Such were the words interchanged as they were departing. The

farewell was a sad ha ; we one thought we should never meet again.

An hour later the wind changed to north east with great violence. The ocean became one mass of foam and the snow fell so densely that our view was limited to about three feet. Every moment we looked to see if our comrades had not tumbled back. The day goes on and night spends itself without any sign of them. The captain sunk in gloom began to weep and his example was followed by us. It was indeed far from pleasant.

The dawn brought with it beautiful weather, a calm sea and a brilliant sun; there was nothing to obstruct the view as far as the eye could see. But during the whole day no one returned. " Alas, said the captain, " it is all over for the rest of the crew, we can do nothing but pray for the repose of their souls. " They must have all perished, for no tidings have ever been heard of them. " " They are very lucky " rejoined Toussaint. " They are better off than we. God has withdrawn

them from the world ; would that he had done the same by us.”—“ You should not speak thus ” returned the Captain. “ God knows best what is to be done ; if he has sent this shipreck as a punishment, let us endeavor by our resignation to appease his anger. May His holy will be done ! ” “ But what is to become of us here ? How are we to spend the winter upon this rock ? ” asked another. “ Despair will not better our case. Though we were to pull every hair out of our heads what good would follow. Let us take courage and trust in Providence.” counselled another.

§ V.

A WINTER SPENT UPON A ROCK.

E spent the winter on the vessel, the ice had formed around its sides and firmly attaching it to the rock rendered it as solid as a bridge. The

water which had gained entrance became congealed here and there without having reached the cabin astern where we took shelter from the violence of the winds. All our provisions consisted of a barrel of dry flour, not the most delicate dish, I assure you; while for drink we had only the snows of heaven, without the luxury of a melting pan. We had neither matches, flint, stone or brick, and as a result we were compelled to remain in bed, being unable to start a fire. At times the numbness in our limbs forced us to go on deck to take a little exercise and put our blood in circulation. Like a vast desert the sea surrounded us on three sides while a long blue line to the north marked out the Labrador coast. Three times during this sad winter the tempest raged with fury, cracking the already frail woodwork of our vessel and threatening to sweep away the rock and island of ice, which had formed around us. At first we were very melancholy and taciturn but gradually becom-

ing accustomed to our miserable lot, we chatted from under the bedclothes and at times a laugh would break the monotony of our terrible situation. To what condition of things can not man accustom himself ?

Hunger and cold carried off Asselin in January, and he was soon followed by Sansterre. We looked at one another in silence inwardly contemplating that our turn would come next. Their frozen corpses were laid upon their beds, continually before our eyes, as a horrible reminder to us to prepare for our voyage into eternity. Toward the end of March when we went on deck, the wind penetrated our frail forms so unmercifully that we were forced to remain in our cabin. It was with extreme difficulty that we dragged ourselves to the barrel of flour to get our daily rations. This done we hurried back to our beds and buried ourselves under the clothes in a vain endeavor to keep a little heat in our bodies. We were now thoroughly

resigned and death would have been a relief to us. It is true that the captain left behind him a wife and children, and whenever he thought of them he was greatly afflicted, but as for my brother and I, orphans and friendless as we were, the world had no attractions for us. We expected death at every moment.

About the 8th of April three young men boarded our ship and descended to the cabin. They evidently considered that they were aboard an abandoned vessel, for when they set eyes on us they drew back several paces, thoroughly frightened, believing that they were in the presence of the dead come to life. Pale death-like skeletons that we were, it is not surprising that when we cast the fixed gaze of our haggard eyes upon them they were unable to speak for some moments. "How did you come here?" at last asked one of them. Our captain then briefly narrated to them the circumstances connected with the shipwreck and concluded by asking them if

they would not bring us assistance. The kind young fellows were deeply moved and with tears trickling down their weather-beaten faces they said : " You are too weak and the ice is too unsafe for us to take you away now. We will go to our ship and return as speedily as possible. Meanwhile have courage." They were three Englishmen from Newfoundland, who were out in search of cat-fish. Sadly we watched them disappear, as they jumped with the aid of spiked poles from one cake of floating ice to another and with tears in our eyes we despairingly said to ourselves : " Will they ever return. Ah ! no, they will soon forget us. It is now all up with us."

Nevertheless their visit had inspired us with new hopes for it takes very little to rekindle in the heart of man a love for life. We looked for the fulfillment of the promises of the three men with that desperation with which a drowning man grasps at a straw. Each day the sun

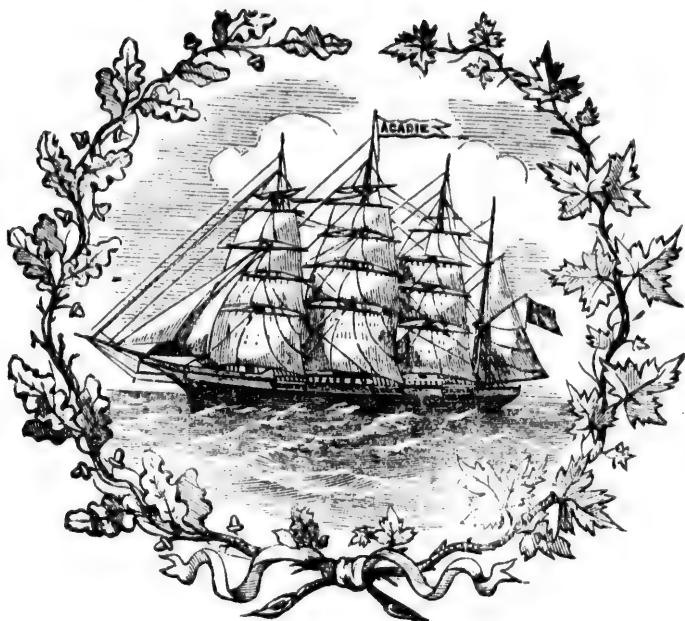
became warmer and we dragged ourselves to the deck where we stood for hours anxiously scanning the horizon.

Fifteen long, gloomy, restless days we thus passed without seeing any one and we bemoaned our fate. The captain threw himself upon his knees and lifting his hands toward heaven he implored : " Oh ! Lord, we wail and weep in this valley of tears. Have pity on us. Oh, good, kind, pious Virgin give us strength to bear our affliction to the end."

When the prayer was over, Toussaint ascended to the bridge, while the captain and I, thoroughly exhausted and discouraged, remained in our cabin. Suddenly Toussaint gave out a cry, which, to us, resembled one of despair and we trembled greatly. " Captain," he said, " do not fear, it is our good friends who are returning." We were not much reassured by this ; we had been so long a time without being able to speak or move. The English fishermen carried us in their arms like little children on

board their vessel where they fed us on soup and little by little we regained our strength to such an extent that after two weeks we were able, peg poles in hand, to join our friends in the search for cat-fish.

One month later they put us ashore at St. John, New-Foundland, where we took passage on an English steamer for Bordeaux. St. Malo is but a short distance from Bordeaux and the surprise of our friends in St. Malo at seeing us alive can well be imagined. They thought we had long since been at the bottom of the sea and yet here we unexpectedly returned like apparitions from beyond the grave.



CHAPTER III.

A DASH FOR LIBERTY.

§ I.

FIRST ATTEMPT AT DESERTING.

THE sailor's life is a cheerless one ; we had no sooner arrived in St. Malo than we were obliged to embark on a frigate commissioned to protect the rights of France on the coast of Newfoundland. In addition to the crew the vessel carried some fifty soldiers under the command of a superior officer ; but

the safety of the ship was, as usual, entrusted to captain Cottin. In times of emergency only the soldiers offered their assistance; aside from this they were limited to drill and to basking in the sun. At the end of June we entered port St. John. It was here that I suggested to my brother the idea of deserting. "Let us quit the ship, I exclaimed; what a weary life is ours! Can slavery be worse? We have no parents, no friends, our nights are spent on the water and we are compelled to work in all kinds of weather; blows, shipwreck and death threatening us each moment, such is our lot! Let us go to Canada and make a search for our parents; we can then live on land like the rest of men." "Let us do so," was the answer.

We set off in the evening. Already the streets of the city had disappeared behind us and we had advanced a good distance into the country, when three inhabitants informed the police that two sailors were deserting from the frigate.

We were brought back under arms, thrown into a dungeon for the night, and there spent six days on black biscuit and water. Brought for trial before a court martial I was condemned to receive twenty lashes and my brother twelve. My punishment was more severe as I had suggested the desertion. The day following our trial, about one o'clock in the afternoon, a sergeant opened the door of our dungeon and in a solemn tone said : " Prisoners, come forth to receive the lash." Trembling from head to foot, we were led to the base of a large mast and ordered to remove our shirts. Our feet were placed in irons and at arms length our hands were attached to two rings above our heads. The soldiers were ranged on both sides and each blow resounded amid the silence. Writhing like a worm I was unable to suppress cries of pain.

Each stroke lessened my strength and at the eighteenth blow I fainted. The doctor proclaimed me unable to

bear any more. Without flinching my brother bore his twelve stripes. I remained for six weeks in bed without being able to move scarcely. The salve which the doctor applied to my wounds was almost as painful as the lash. When sufficiently recovered I received the two remaining blows and thus did I solve my debt to the last farthing.

§ II.

I DESERT A SECOND TIME.

AT the end of July of the year 1870, after coaling at Pictou, our vessel went to the northern coast of Newfoundland to fulfill the object of its mission. Scarcely had we reached this place when, on the first of August, the captain assembling the whole crew on deck, exclaimed in a voice of emotion: "I have great news to communicate. War

has been declared between France and Prussia. I have just received a telegram summoning us to a place of both danger and honor. We sail on the 6th of this month." These words were received with applause, each one burning with a patriotic ardor to cross swords with the Prussians.

On our way to Black Bay on the coast of Labrador, the captain gave us permission to go ashore and enjoy a day's fun. Our six boats were lowered in a moment and in jumped sailors, soldiers, sergeants and captains. We indulged in shooting, racing on the beach, a hearty meal and lying upon the grass. We had a gay time.

The sergeant who was accustomed to drill us proposed a second desertion. I answered that it would be very difficult to start again as I had not yet recovered from my wounds ; and, I continued, " should we be taken again, it would be impossible for me to bear the lash in my present condition." — " There is no

question of the lash," he replied, "it is a matter of liberty or death. We are now in a time of war ; any one caught deserting is shot ; what have you to say ?" — " Well, test the others," I replied, " if they decide upon leaving I will follow."

The five others composing our little knot, proclaimed themselves ready for any thing. Waiting for a favorable opportunity we left the field about four o'clock in the afternoon, following the shore of Black Bay to the source of a stream bordered by pine trees. Southwest of our left arose a mountain ; on our right was extended a flat piece of land, covered here and there with dwarf pines and bounded half a mile in the distance by a range of hills. We followed in each others footsteps in silence and with our eyes on the look out. My heart beat furiously within me.

After half an hour's march, the sergeant said to us : " Follow my brave lads to the top of that rock." We clam-

bered up as best we could to the summit which was covered with snow. "We must now deceive those who may be in pursuit," he said. "Remove your shoes and attach them to your feet, heels in front." The order was promptly obeyed. Fifteen minutes later we had crossed the line of snow and were descending the opposite side of the mountain. "Put on your shoes again," spoke the sergeant, "here we must disband. Together we might perish from hunger and again, if a portion of the band is taken, the others at least will have a chance to escape."

Tears came into our eyes, the more we gazed upon each other the more we wept. Finally, taking each other by the hand we bid farewell for life. Separated into three parties we set off in three directions. Some went south-west, some north and the others north-west, parting with such expressions as : "May God help you ! May He lead you to your home and your family !"

I had for companion my brother

Toussaint Marin. We journeyed on till evening. About six o'clock Toussaint said to me : " If we could reach that second mountain we could erect a hut for the night." With God's help we succeeded in reaching it, worn out with fatigue. Selecting a rent in a rock, we closed the entrance with different sized stones and thus obtained shelter against the wild beasts and severe weather, and, moreover, in the event of a pursuit no one would suspect that behind those rocks, piled in disorder, were two human beings. Our rough wall resembled a heap of stones which had fallen from above.

We retired without any supper. About nine o'clock we began to hear the firing of the cannon on board and from time to time caught sight of the glow of bombs bursting in the air. The noise echoed from mount to mount like thunder and shook the surrounding ground. For the space of two days the firing was continued. Without doubt this was intended

as a signal to return if by chance we had become lost, or else a pursuit had been organized and the voice of the cannon indicated the place where the deserters if caught were to be led back. That night we trembled much for our safety but owing to fatigue we were enabled to sleep. I watched till midnight over Toussaint, when he performed the same service for me till morning.

§ III

THE COAST OF LABRADOR.

WE remained in this place five days not daring to go farther lest we should meet any of the soldiers who might be engaged in our pursuit. From our species of observatory we could see the sea about four miles distant, as also the column of smoke which ascended from

the spot where the vessel lay at anchor. The dwarf trees in the vicinity were so low that a man could look over them. We crawled about the neighborhood to gather a few wild fruits and roots. We were provided with a gun and amunition but no game passed within range. At night indeed we could hear the wolves that prowled about but fear prevented us from going out, and moreover how could we shoot them in the dark ? In truth we were reduced to a very meagre diet.

On the sixth day I said to Toussaint : “ The ship must have set sail, perhaps we may obtain some means of subsistence.—At all events let us keep clear of the sea shore ; they may yet be after us and have ceased firing to ensnare us. Moreover, before leaving they may have commissioned some one to detain us and the Jersais would sell us for a barrel of pork.” We adopted the following plan : We were to ascend the coast of Labrador always towards the interior to a

Canadian establishment far enough removed not to have heard of our desertion. Natashquan of Mingan would do, then we could take some vessel for Quebec and afterwards set about finding our parents. This was a bright idea. What happiness it would be to find a father or mother, a sister or a brother ! Then we could enjoy a hearth surrounded by peace and friendship.

“Alas !” objected Toussaint, “how can we expect to find our parents in such a vast country ? It were as easy to find a needle in a stack of hay.”—“Our abduction,” I replied, “must have occasioned some report at the time. By proclaiming ourselves lost children, the public will at once indicate the parish whither we must direct our steps.”—“Perhaps,” he answered, “we may make enquiry very far from the place of our birth, where none will have heard of our misfortune.”—I replied that we would travel over Canada in every direction ; and have recourse moreover to the papers.—“But

our parents may not recognize us after such a long absence? We were so young when we were stolen from their arms," remarked Toussaint.—"Who knows," I replied, "but we may have preserved some family trait. Any way our age will coincide with the date of our abduction. After all let us trust in Providence, the most essential thing is to leave here."—"Yes, yes," he exclaimed, "let us place all our confidence in the hands of that kind Providence Who has never abandoned us, and may He preserve our old parents."

With such words we sustained each other's courage and deceived the pangs of hunger.

We kept on foot the whole day traversing moss and stones, climbing and descending, without any other food but the raspberries and wild fruits to be met with on our way; and when night came on our limbs were stiff and sore. We erected another hut on the model of the first and within we stretched ourselves

at full length. Our couch was made of the thick moss that covers all those rocks ; it takes the place of earth, shrubs and frequently of trees. Though it offers a downy bed to sleep upon, it is not the less inconvenient to the pedestrian who sinks half way into it as if it were sponge.

I said to Toussaint : " I am very hungry." " And so am I," he replied, " I wish God would provide us with a small slice of bread ; with what a relish we would devour it." An hour later two partridges alighted about twenty feet from our hut. Toussaint raised his gun and brought both down at a blow. I hastened to gather them and we immediately devoured them without cooking them. How sweet they tasted. It was the first meat we had tasted since our desertion from the ship.

The ensuing day we were very sick, the raw partridges had gone against us. We were unable to walk for the next four days, and fed ourselves on the fruits of the vicinity. Occasionally we felt dis-

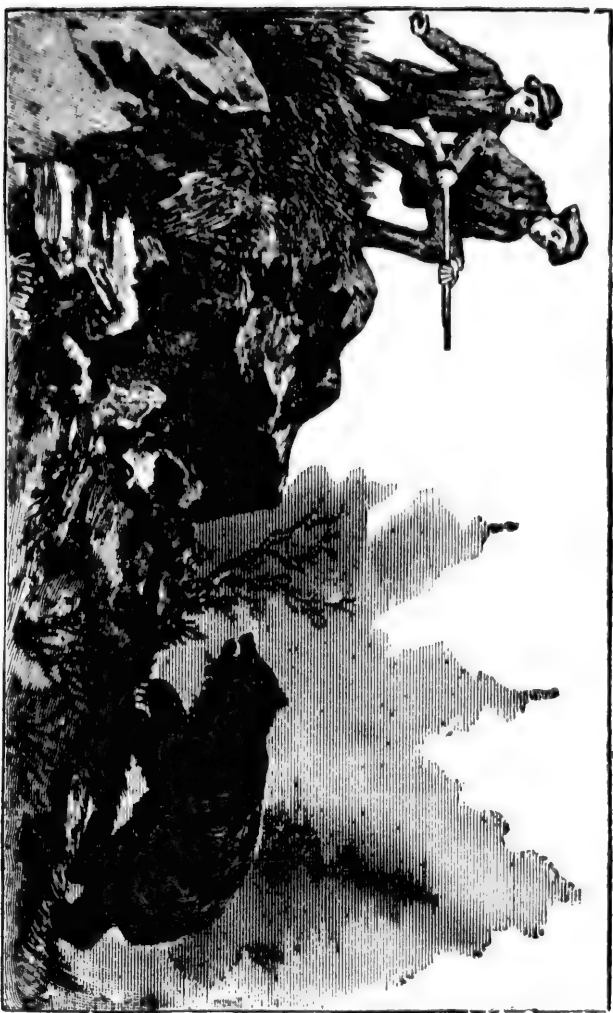
couraged but exteriorly I endeavoured to seem cheerful so as not to depress my brother. "We were very foolish," he said, "to have left the vessel; had we remained we should not now be in such trouble. — I replied that if we had been foolish in leaving the vessel, we should take care not to grow discouraged as we would be still worse. Remember that you have often told me that Providence never yet abandoned us. And then, think of our parents..... The thought of our father and mother was ever a bright one.

§ IV

A BEAR.

SOMEWHAT refreshed after a rest of four days we resolved to continue on our way. We were scarcely able to walk. Toussaint had just said: "My head is reeling, I can go no farther,"

We had but time to seize upon our gun (page 50).



when I exclaimed : " Look at that large animal advancing towards us." It was a bear. We were right near a large rock to which we fled. Placing the gun end-wise against the boulder, Toussaint put his foot on the muzzle and scrambled to the top. Then stretching his arms he drew me up. We had hardly reached the summit when the bear's paws were placed on the rock. The brute's eyes darting through us and its mouth sending forth grunt after grunt. We stood breathless and petrified.

Finally, Toussaint took aim and sent a ball through the jaw and shoulder of the bear ; it fell to the ground with a cry of pain. Taking the gun I discharged a second ball which entered the heart and left the animal lifeless. Quickly descending we cut a slice off the haunch and greedily devoured the raw meat. Never had we relished a meal so much.

" If God," exclaimed Toussaint, " would often send us fresh meat like that we could hope to reach the end of our jour-

ney.”—“Yes,” I replied, “but let us thank Him for these favors if we desire Him to renew them.” Falling upon our knees beneath a bright warm sun, full of joy and gratitude, removing our hats, we recited our prayers aloud. All nature seemed to rejoice and pray with us. It is in times of need and danger that man best understands how much he depends upon his Maker.

§ V

SEAWARD.

WE spent two days near the food which God had given us and became a little stronger. The carcass becoming tainted, I said to my companion : “Let us cut a slice and be off. Suppose we try to reach the sea, the ship must be far

away by this time ; it would not have remained so long for seven men of our worth. Still it may have commissioned some one to arrest us ; in any case let us die if we must ; it is better to breathe our last in the midst of men than among the wild beasts. What have you to say ?” —“ Agreed,” was the reply.

We started with a firm step and walked more steadily than we had hitherto. On our way we talked of the pleasure of once more seeing our parents. But a sad thought often recurred to dampen Toussaint's hopes. “ Alas !” he would say, “ our parents are perhaps dead by this time, and soon we too will be in our grave.” —“ Let us hope for the best,” I rejoined. “ It is now twenty-five years since the time of our abduction ; our parents cannot have died of old age. In any case we must still have some brothers and sisters ; we will surely find some member of our family.” —“ I hope,” he would add, “ and desire it but I doubt ; something whispers that my bones will

lie upon this wild land." This he kept saying every day.

For five long weeks we journeyed on without reaching the ocean. A black and covered sky hung continually above us, the sun appearing at rare intervals only. We had evidently gone astray. Now and then we chanced to shoot a partridge or two or some more succulent bird ; but for the past fifteen days we had been unable to obtain any kind of meat. Our strength had become much reduced. Toussaint exclaimed : " We must pitch our camp here and take some days rest, for I am unable to drag myself farther." We had reached the shores of a lake, some fifteen miles in length, by four and a half in breadth ; on one side of which lie about three miles of flat ground bordered by a high mountain. " Let us go," suggested Toussaint, " and rest ourselves at its base." We preferred spending the night on elevated to low ground, as caverns, excavations or stones to form a shelter were more easily ob-

tained ; on descending from their summit we generally found a stream of water on the bank of which we pitched our tent.

When we had advanced half way, Toussaint threw himself exhausted upon the ground, exclaiming : “ I am dying of hunger.” We had not discovered any kind of fruit since morning. Bending down upon my knees I recited the following prayer which had more than once comforted us : “ Remember, O most holy Virgin Mary, that it has never been heard that any one having recourse to thy protection, imploring thy aid and asking thy assistance, has been abandoned. Animated with a like confidence and groaning beneath the weight of my sins, I prostrate myself at thy feet. O Mother of God, despise not my petitions, but vouchsafe to hear and grant them.”

Scarcely had I terminated this prayer when moving on a few steps I found a great quantity of *atacas*. Calling my brother to join me, we devoured them

with eagerness. After satisfying our hunger we counselled one another to thank the kind Virgin, which we did with all our heart.

A quarter of an hour later we gained the base of the mountain and there constructed our hut for the night. We had been unable to find any water in the neighborhood.

Our work advanced slowly ; our limbs were stiff and sore and we had to sink in the gristly moss that covered the ground ; Toussaint especially was more often seated than standing ; never had he appeared so worn looking. The night presented a threatening aspect, the sky being covered with clouds, and my heart was steeped in anxiety.

§ VI

MY BROTHER'S DEATH.

Two hours after we had stretched ourselves on the bed of moss, having enjoyed a short sleep, I awoke and

assuming a sitting posture gazed upon my brother. His face was pale and livid ; he was raving, whilst his lips were parted. "Are you ill ? " I asked.—" Yes, very ill," he replied. He soon began to tremble throughout his whole frame and so violently that his teeth chattered in his mouth. He writhed in pain, a prey to cramps and rent the air with terrible groans. " I suffer," he exclaimed, " all that it is possible for one to suffer. Unless relief soon comes I must die." There I sat with my arms crossed, mute and confounded, without a word to say ; my poor brother tossed madly with internal pain, I was unable to offer the slighted relief though he complained of his suffering.

He was parched with thirst. " Louis, Louis," he cried in a voice that rent my heart, " my dear Louis, get me one drop of water, only one ; my throat is dry and my bowels are on fire." It was fully three miles from the lake, the night was dark and the wolves howled about our hut.

“ Dear brother,” I answered, “ it grieves me much to see you suffer thus and to listen to your moans without being able to relieve you. You know I cannot go out at this hour ; the lake is too far off, I could not find my way in the darkness, and before I could go fifty feet the wolves would tear me to pieces. If you could only wait until daylight, how gladly I would go for water ! ” — “ Is the day far off now ? ” he asked. — “ An hour and a half or two hours at most,” I replied. — “ How slowly the time passes ! How I suffer, Louis, oh ! how I suffer ! I beg of God to let me die lest I should become impatient. How sweet death would be. ” In the presence of such agony my heart was almost breaking ; I kept silence, not having any words strong enough to console such suffering.

Day was beginning to dawn and I said to Toussaint : “ Are you still thirsty ? ” — “ Yes, yes, very thirsty. ” — “ Well, I am going to fetch you some water. If I be a little long do not get discouraged, you

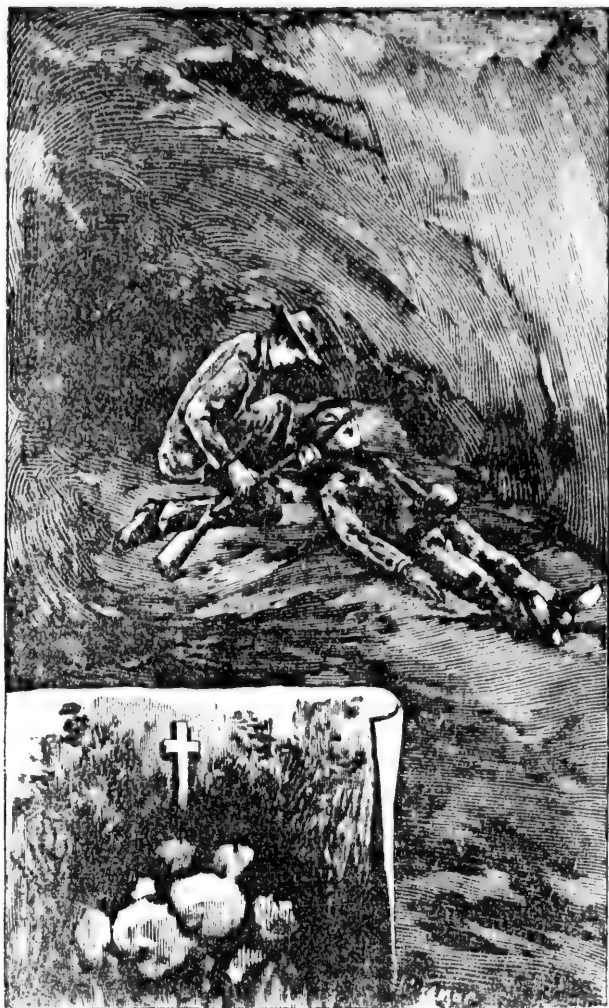
know the lake is a good piece away." I set out with the carabine on my shoulder, having no other receptacle for the water than the barrel of the gun. My legs were very lame and I stumbled almost at each step ; my head was reeling and the trees seemed to turn about me. Five acres from the lake I sat down upon a large flat stone, unable to go any farther : " Holy Mother," I cried, " come to my help, give me something to eat ; if not, I cannot hope to reascend the mountain ; I am dying here whilst my brother is fast sinking over yonder."

With an effort I with much difficulty reached the lake. As I was in the act of stooping down to fill the muzzle of my gun I heard a splutter amid the weeds, which sent a shock through my nerves. What should I discover on turning about but a large trout which had become entangled. In a moment I seized it and flung it ashore. Then with the fish in one hand and the gun in the other I turned back towards the mountain.

Having reached the large rock, before mentioned, I seated myself again and consumed with relish half the trout. My strength became somewhat restored as also my courage. Bending on my knees upon the stone which had served as a resting place and dining table, with head uncovered and my face turned towards the lake I thanked the kind Virgin for the gift she had bestowed.

I walked with a firmer step but was covered with perspiration. I looked anxiously about with my eyes wide open. It seemed as if I saw the ghost of my poor brother in every bush of that forest of dwarf trees. On reaching the hut I shook in every fibre and a cold perspiration overspread me. I asked myself in agony : " Is he dead or is he alive ? " Before entering I looked through an opening in the rock and saw Toussaint rolling about mechanically on his couch.

I entered and asked : " How are you now, brother ? "—" Very weak."—" Are you thirsty ? "—" Yes." I presented the



I presented him the end of my gun, and he drank few drops of water (page 6).

end of the gun to him ; he was no longer able to lift himself, but he drank a few drops only, and said : “ That’s good, I’ve enough, thanks.” He added in a weak voice : “ I’m very hungry.”—“ If you had food,” I asked, “ do you think that you would have enough strength to eat it ? ” —“ Yes, with great relish.” I cut a slice and gave it to him ; he took my hand and pressed it. He wished to smile but his stiffened cheeks could only render a grimace. I inferred that his end was approaching. After eating he said : “ I am better. It is not strange, it does not seem to have been the thirst so much as hunger that occasioned my suffering. Had it not been for the trout I could not have survived the day. I no longer feel any pain, I am sleepy and my eyes close in spite of me.” His eye was glassy and fixed upon me. I said to him : “ Before going to sleep, I wish you, my brother, to recommend your soul to God.”—“ Why do you recommend this ; do you find me worse ? ”—“ Alas ! poor

brother, I fear you are.”—“No, no, I feel better.” He fell asleep as I knelt beside him in prayer and overcome with sadness. I thought of Jesus who said at the hour of his agony : “I’m sad even unto death.”

Half an hour later he awoke with pains in his right side and cramps all over. I rubbed him vigorously to give him some relief. His cries were heart-rending as he writhed in suffering. Often he exclaimed : “I am going to die, I beg to die, I can bear the pain no longer. I regret only that I must leave you alone in this desert ; what will become of you ? Should you fall sick, who will attend you ? If you die who will bury you ? You will become a prey for wild beasts. As for me I have a brother to consign my bones to the earth.” I replied : “Banish those sad thoughts, brother. Trust in God’s mercy, and recite once more with me the prayer which we never forget to say each evening : “O Mary, my mother and my

Queen, I throw myself upon the bosom of your mercy ; from this moment, for all the rest of my life and at the hour of my death I confide my body and soul to your especial protection. I confide and place in your hands all my hopes and my consolations, all my joys and pains, the course and the end of my life, in order that by thy intercession, my works and intentions may be regulated according to the desires of your divine Son."

About half past eleven, Toussaint grew more calm ; his strength was sinking, his face became pale and livid and his look anxious and bewildered. I felt his pulse, it beat feebly and unevenly. " Dear Louis," he said in a scarce audible voice, "good bye ! I am dying. If you find our parents, tell them how we have suffered far from them ; how I would like to have seen them once more. But God does not will it so, we will meet in heaven. Come here till I kiss you once more. May God help you in your trouble ! Good bye, my

brother. These are my last words to you, I feel my heart sinking, farewell."

His agony lasted about twenty minutes. I remained quiet upon his couch, but his breast heaved laboriously. I watched over him and covered him with my tears. About noon he quietly passed away ; I could not state exactly when life ceased. I remained seated by him, overcome with grief. My heart was loaded down and bursting with sorrow, yet not a tear could fall from my eyes.

Without as well as within me darkness prevailed. The sky was covered and great clouds enveloped the mountain. Between hail and a wind that bent the trees, and cold combined, I shivered at the same time that I wept. The fount of my tears opened and I sobbed over my brother's remains. " I wish to die here, I cried out, I can drag my form no farther ; never will I get out of this forest. In life, dear brother, we have been united, let us be so in death." There I spent the afternoon stretched beside the corpse

resolving to gather no more fruit but to allow the little of life I still retained to ebb away by degrees within the hut.

When evening came, I knelt down and with my hands dug out of the moss, in a breadth of two feet a sort of grave and there deposited the ashes of the dead ; then gathering stones I endeavored to pile them around the sides when I felt as if my strength was leaving me forever. Then I closed the opening with a large flat stone, with the words : " Farewell light of day, this hut will be my tomb."

The snow had ceased to fall, but the wind continued its mournful sound. The wolves, attracted no doubt by the odor of the body, raged about in a body tearing the ground around my miserable habitation. Taking the gun I fired three or four discharges ; the noise of these detonations echoing against the mountain made my hair rise on end. That night was a sleepless one. I spent the hours praying over the body, now ad-

dressing Jesus and at another time calling upon his Holy Mother. "Turn thy heart to me, O Jesus, for I wish this to be my last resting place, and here I desire to breathe my last. Do not abandon me, Mother of mercy ; help me during the days of my pilgrimage and preserve my soul at the hour of my death." Then remembering my brother I cried from the depth of my misery : "*De profundis clamavi ad te, Domine ; Domine, exaudi vocem meam.*"

I spent three days over him that had ceased to be. The love of life is deeply rooted in man, and I felt it coming back feebly at first, but gradually increasing its strength and I resolved to try to prolong my painful existence. Moreover I was reminded on reflection that it was not lawful to die willingly from inertia ; and I did not wish to stand before the tribunal of the Almighty Judge with the guilt of suicide on my hands. Three or four times a day I gathered in the neighborhood a meal of *atacas* and roots.

Grief and weakness had greatly diminished my appetite.

On the morning of the fourth day, I heaped the stones which I had gathered on the body of my brother, and demolished the hut over these, so that his mortal remains were free from the reach and profanation of the wolves. With my knife I cut out a cross and placed it on the summit of this rustic tomb, to mark, should there ever pass by this sorrowful place a living man, that there a christian was sleeping his last sleep. On my knees and with my head uncovered I prayed long for him I was about to leave. " Lord, grant him eternal rest. He suffered so much during his short and painful life, his joys were so few and his load so heavy, that he must have made most of his penance here below. *Requiescat in pace.* Adieu ! poor brother, dear friend, inseparable companion of my life ! I leave you with regret ! If you have reached your celestial home, listen to me, protect me, guide me in the midst of the diffi-

culties which still remain on this earth until the end of my misery is reached." In tears I withdrew. My soul was rent, as if I had left a portion of my heart beneath that heap of stones. I walked a few acres, then stopped to retrace my way to the mountain and shed new floods of tears. His whole life came back to my memory ; I recalled Toussaint's kindness, his friendship towards me, all that we had borne together of good and ill. I asked myself: "What will become of me without my brother? He only has loved me. I am alone in this forest ; though I should succeed in again reaching the company of men, I will yet be alone. I cannot be happy without him." I was weak and advanced but slowly, and kept looking behind me as often as before. What a day of sadness was it!

§ VII

AN ESQUIMAU METIS.

THAT evening I was too tired and too much a prey to gloom to undertake the construction of a hut, but stretched myself beneath the stars in the fissure of a rock which I roofed with pine branches. I scarcely enjoyed a moment's rest the entire night from fear, for the image of my brother was ever present to my imagination ; I thought I saw him whichever way I turned.

At dawn I resumed my journey, resolved upon reaching the ocean and entering the first fisherman's hut I should chance to meet. The fear of being captured and surrendered to the ship, of suffering twenty blows of the lash, or of being shot dead, no longer influenced me ; death, on the contrary, seemed a fate to be envied.

I had been walking for some hours when suddenly in the distance appeared an unusual sight. Was it a man or beast? or was it a soldier in disguise from the ship engaged in pursuit of me? I stepped behind a rock, trembling from head to foot; and once more the desire to live was revived.

Whether man or beast it continued to advance, and was now but a few hundred feet away. I ventured to peep but was discovered and accosted with the words in broken French: "You, fear not; I am a friend." It was a Metis that addressed me, partly of Acadian descent, partly Esquimaux, occupied hunting caribou in the surrounding mountains. He was completely covered with fur; boots, trousers, coat and cap, all were made of seal skin. He started back in surprise on beholding my lean and ghostly appearance. "Where do you come from?" — I spoke an untruth in reply, which may God forgive. "I am a sailor belonging to a French vessel; the captain allowed

his crew to land for a day's pleasure ; when evening came he raised anchor before I had returned, thinking that all the men were on board ; since then I have been wandering among these rocks." — " For how many days ? " — " It must be more than two months." — " On what have you subsisted ? " — " Pardon me if I say on fifty kinds of unsavoury meals ; on roots, wild fruit and decayed fish. It is wonderful how little will keep a man alive ! Pity me, friend, and give me something to eat." — " Well, follow me to my hut."

He had raised a very comfortable wooden cabin, which possessed the luxury of a stove and a brass kettle. He roasted a large slice of caribou for me which sent a most delicious odor about. I could not refrain from smiling ; it was now three weeks since I had tasted a mouthful of meat. The meal gave me some strength. I remained three days with this kind fellow who treated me in a brotherly way ; I could sleep deeply

and peacefully at night, and gradually grew stronger. What happiness in misfortune to meet a sympathising heart! May He who records a glass of water given in His name record that unknown indian who restored me to life and started me on the road to the inhabited world.

“Have I far to go,” I inquired, “before reaching the sea?” — “Six leagues.” — “In which direction does it lie?” — “Behind that mountain.” He pointed to the south-west. “Before separating will you grant me a favor?” I asked. — “What?” — “Change clothes.” — “You are jesting, your garments are better than mine.” — “No matter, I have no other means of showing my thankfulness.” I insisted, for they would be very useful; no one could recognise me in such a habit. Finally he consented. We parted with a shake hands, he for the chase, I for the sea, he dressed like a French sailor, and I as an Esquimaux, with a suit of skin made from a single piece, boots, trousers, coat and cap, that

made me bristle like a seal. Catching sight of myself in a crystal lake I had to laugh at my comical appearance.

I made good way, with a piece of caribou on my shoulder and a cheerful heart. The hope grew stronger that I should yet be amongst men and perhaps meet my parents. In any case I should reach the land of my birth and find friends amongst my countrymen, a pleasure I had never yet enjoyed but which must be very sweet. This thought enabled me to ascend the rocks and made my garments supportable which apart from the heat they occasioned were infested with vermin. I was covered with perspiration but hope sustained me. I was already inhaling the sea air and its saline moisture brought with it a scent of liberty. In a word, were it not that the thought of my brother came now and then to sadden me I would have been quite happy. In the distance, loomed up in the shape of a mirage the land of my forefathers.

CHAPTER IV.

HOMeward BOUND.

§ I

LABRADOR TO ATICOSTI.

I TRAVELLED on for the space of two days, spending the first night in the cavern of a rock. Late on the evening of the second I arrived on the banks of Thunder River, a small fishing station comprising three houses, from which I kept some distance lest any agents in the pay of the vessel or from motives of

officiousness might apprehend me. This took place on a Saturday, about the middle of October.

A yawl lay at anchor near a buoy two acres from shore. This I resolved to take possession of and place my life in safety. I had more than once heard that in cases of necessity one has a right to another's goods. But was I in extreme necessity? I can only affirm that He who sounds the depths of the heart was witness at that moment of my good faith and the sincerity of my intention.

Perceiving a favorable opportunity I jumped into a small boat which was drawn upon the sands. Unwilling to take more risk than necessary I took care, before starting to attach this latter to the buoy. In the yawl, I discovered folded beneath the seats two large sails, which were of absolute necessity for my escape; I thus comprehended that kind Providence had heard my supplications and desired my safety. This manifestation encouraged me to trust myself to

the ocean. Moreover in the stern of the boat I found a candle which furnished me with a meal on the following day. Hunger rebels at nothing.

The kind Virgin occasioned a strong breeze, before which I spread all my canvas and steered towards Anticosti. The weather was mild and, though my stomach was empty, my heart was full of hope and the yawl sped through the waves.

At day break I lowered the sails for fear of being seen from shore and thus determine a pursuit. At noon I again fearlessly hoisted them.

I had made sufficient headway to allow the convexity of the ocean to secrete me from the most penetrating eye or the most powerful glass.

About two o'clock the shore of the island of Anticosti began to emerge from the waters ; my heart almost burst with joy. Steering right for the light on the north-eastern portion of the island I reached the shore on the first shades of

evening falling. The light house was attended by a Canadian, who, together with his family, treated me kindly, offering me food and lodging and the present of a loaf on starting again next morning. I thought within myself: "What kind people the Canadians are; how I long to be in their midst and end my misery."

§ II

ANTICOSTI TO GASPÉ.

THE whole of that day, and night and part of the following day I kept rocking on the waves. Cape Desrosiers appeared in the distance but I scarcely moved on account of a wind that blew across my way. The temperature had lowered, and I remained stiff and shivering in the bottom of the yawl with one hand on

the rudder ; with my loaf in the other I solaced myself with eating an unusual dainty. At Labrador I was almost starved. On the ship we had to be satisfied with a black biscuit that had to be softened in water before a tooth could penetrate it.

Night was falling as I entered Gaspé Basin. I composed myself in the bottom of the yawl covered by one of the sails. At sunrise I sailed farther into the bay and made my way to the residence of Mr Georges Bouthillier, a legislative councillor. An old woman answered my summons, but my costume forced her to utter a cry of alarm. " Fear nothing, Madam. I am a poor man without anything ; I come to beg a morsel for the love of God." Mr Bouthillier arriving in the mean time told the woman to set me at the table. He questioned me as to where I was going, where I came from and what I was seeking. I returned evasive answers, for fear of recognition, for our vessel had often passed Port

Gaspé. At the termination of the meal, I bade him good bye, and set sail for Percé.

§ III

PERCÉ.

A favorable breeze was blowing. At six in the evening, my boat sailed at equal distance between the small village of Percé, which lay at the foot of a hill, and the great steep rock around the summit of which the sea gulls kept in continual flutter.

I approached the house of a man named Dégrouchie, an old *Jersais* with a snow white beard. On perceiving me through the door way, his three grand daughters exclaimed : " Papa, do not lodge that wild tramp." He cried out with a cross voice : " You cannot stop here, continue on your way." I calmly replied in good French : " My friend, you

need not be angry, I have asked a favor not for love of me, but for the love of God."

On reaching the shore, he recalled me: "One moment, stranger, are you French or Jersais?" — "I am called a Canadian." — "From what part of Canada?" — "It is not easy for me to say. When but a child I was stolen from home and am now endeavoring to reach my fatherland and find my parents. Good evening, sir. It is growing late and I must make haste to find a lodging." — "Return," he said, "and spend the night here." On hearing my story large tears fell down his cheeks, and he reproached himself for having refused me shelter. "It is the fault of the girls, who are afraid of everything." — "I do not blame them," I rejoined, "such a one as I, with such a suit, dirty, black and covered with oil, would have forced me to act in the same way, perhaps." Next morning after breakfast, we parted the best of friends.

§ IV

CARLETON.

I skirted the county coasts from Gaspé to Bonaventure ; my design was to force my way into the Baie des Chaleurs and thence reach Quebec, where I hoped to hear something of my old parents. The wind continued favorable and I made seven or eight knots an hour.

At Carleton I knocked at the door of a tanner, named Mr Cauchon. His wife fainted at the sight of me. A young girl yelled at the top of her voice : " Papa, papa, come and see this horrible man." The tanner rushed up, threw me upon the ground, dealt me three or four kicks upon the legs and annihilated any pride I might have entertained with a stick. In vain I protested that I was the most

innocent of men ; he still continued the flagging, accompanied with repeated oaths. I got on my legs as well as possible and limped back to the boat with my body covered with bruises.

Farewell, Carlton ! I should not soon forget you nor Mr Cauchon.

§ V.

RESTIGOUCHE.

IT was midnight when my boat entered beneath full sail into the silent and deserted port of Restigouche ; the village is built some distant farther up on the river of the same name. I slept till dawn beneath the seats. On awakening I perceived a Micmac Indian standing on the shore. " Friend," he asked, " where do you come from ?" — " From Labrador." —

"You speak the truth, because you are dressed like the people of that place." — "Will you buy my boat?" I enquired. — "How much do you want for it?" — "Twenty-five dollars." — "It is not too much; I will return, wait for fifteen minutes."

I waited the whole day and night but the Indian failed to appear. I regretted having asked such a high price, thinking that he might have been discouraged. Twice I visited the houses a mile away where Acadian hospitality offered me food with great kindness.

Next day at sunrise a Jersais approached. Was he sent by the Indian? If so he concealed it. "Is this boat for sale?" — "Yes." — "For what price?" — "Twenty dollars." — "Too much; I will give sixteen." — "Well, take it."

On obtaining the money I made enquiry about the road to Matane. The Jersais replied: "Follow this road for a league; on reaching the last house, before entering the forest, make new en-

quiries." I set off on foot, with my gun on my shoulder, light and gay ; for once in my life I felt at liberty ; I was beyond the reach of the frigate and never did I possess such a large sum of money.

My plan was to reach the banks of the St. Lawrence, ascend as far as Quebec and make a serious search for my parents. " Poor brother," I thought, " if you had been able to follow me to this place, how happy we should have been together, now that the journey is almost at the end ! But God willed otherwise ! And perhaps at this hour you prefer your lot to mine."

§ VI

ON THE ROAD TO MATANE.

PORT Restigouche lies ninety miles from Matane ; with the exception of two small inns, one three miles from Restigouche, the other a like distance from Matane, no house was to be found on

the way. The road wends its way over hills, down valleys, through forests and marshes ; it is far from good, being little more than a guiding line, whereon vehicles sink up to the hub. Now and then one meets a camp used no doubt by the workingmen who opened the road, by laying round boulders covered with pine bark ; in the interior of the dwelling rises a chimney made of undressed stones : these are the only hotels to be met by travellers ; they are also used as stables for beasts of burden. I slept there three nights ; glad to take shelter from the bad weather and the wolves. This forest, rich and verdant, looked like a paradise in comparison to the naked rocks of Labrador. The ground was firm and the provisions I had taken kept my stomach free from hunger. Thrice I met carriages, containing friendly travellers whom I questioned concerning the right road to Matane and the distance I still had to go ; their answers filled me with courage and energy.

However from continued walking on the evening of the fourth day my feet were sore and bleeding. I limped to that solitary inn in the forest like the advanced guard of civilisation. It was eight o'clock. I asked for lodging. "It is impossible," answered the innkeeper, "there is sickness in the house." No doubt my costume and appearance frightened him. "How far is your nearest neighbor?"—"Nine miles."—"You can easily see that my bleeding feet can carry me no farther. I beg you to take pity on me." He gave no answer and I remained sitting on a bench near the door. I thought within me: "This man is English, his accent shows it. If I can only get amongst Canadians my sufferings will end, I will be received with open arms." Illusion! Later I discovered that there existed many hard hearts amongst Canadians and many kind ones amongst the English: Neither nationality monopolises either.

Meanwhile, a stranger drew up his

carriage. The master of the house whispered something in his ear. "Will you come with me," inquired the traveller; "I live fifteen miles from here, a little above Matane."—"With pleasure, sir; it will make the road to Quebec easier." I enjoyed the ride; we spoke of different things, the time passed quickly, but I concealed my history. We reached his house after midnight.

§ VII

A ROBBERY

THAT man, whose name I forget, invited me to lodge within his house. "I am thankful, sir," I replied. "You have been very kind to me, and I would not like to cause you any trouble. I must

tell you that my clothes are infested with vermin, and God forbid that I should introduce into your house the germ of the foul itch that I suffer from. With your permission I shall spend the night in your barn." He led me to the place and brought some blankets. Making a whole in the hay I slept softly therein covered with blankets.

Two hours later I was awakened by a man making a noise in the barn. He had a dozen bags under his arm, holding a candle in one hand and a measure in the other. I thought he was employed about the house and had come to get grain for the next day. Placing the candle on the floor, he commenced to fill the bags from a large heap of wheat gathered in the end of the barn. He had already filled five bags when he commenced to speak to himself: "Had I known it, I might have brought my little boy to help me."—"I will help you, sir." At the sound of the words, he looked about in confusion and without a word

rushed through the door like lightning. I comprehended that he was a thief.

Getting up I extinguished the candle and then lay down again, but excitement prevented me from sleeping. I approached the house and rapped at the door without receiving any answer. I sat upon the step for an hour when the cold gained upon me. I decided to knock again. The master in a rage exclaimed: "If you do not stop, Indian, I shall take the whip to you and we will see."—"Excuse me, sir, but I have come to inquire if it was you who came to measure wheat to night in the barn."—"Measure the wheat!" He was amazed. Following me to the barn we found five bags filled and five empty, and on the bags was written the visitor's name. "Thanks," he exclaimed, "you have rendered me a service, I suspected that was the man who has been robbing me for a long time, I now have the proof. This time he will pay for all." After breakfast, I wished to start. "No," urged the master,

“you will remain till your feet shall have completely healed. Take these clothes and make a change in the barn.” He offered me an entire suit made of flannel and other goods made in the country. It was not new but still in good order.

I remained twelve days with this kind family, making known who I was ; they wished to take me into their employ, making the most generous offers. “No,” I replied, “now that heaven has restored me to the land of my forefathers, I wish to find my parents ; it is a sacred obligation, a filial duty. My father and mother must have greatly lamented over my abduction ; if they still live I will console them. Adieu ! I am off and will stop only when my efforts shall have met with success.”

CHAPTER V.

SEARCH FOR MY PARENTS.

§ I

QUEBEC.

I ASCENDED the banks of the river as far as St. Denis, passing Metis, Ste. Flavie, Ste. Luce, Rimouski, Bic, St. Fabien, St. Simon, Trois-Pistoles, Cacouna, Rivière-du-Loup, Kamouraska, St. Paschal. I journeyed mostly on foot, sometimes I rode. I stopped at each church to confide my journey to the protection of

the patron saint of the locality and to ask for strength and courage ; at the foot of the altar I felt at ease, it was the only place in the world that I was a little at home. I spared my money for future emergency ; everywhere I was furnished for God's sake with food and a bed.

I reached St. Denis about the middle of November. It was snowing, the roads were bad and I resolved to take the boat for Quebec. On my way I made enquiries every day if there were any people bearing the name of Marin : but no one knew them.

At Québec I made serious research. I took lodging near the market in Lower Town, at the house of a widow, together with several sailors. She referred me to parish priests of Upper Town as the most likely place to obtain correct information. One of the priests told me that he knew of none by the name of Marin in Quebec, but added that he had more than once heard that a man of that

name residing on the way to Richmond had lost a child, one only, however, not three. "Come with me," he said, "we will advertise your misfortune in the papers." The day following there appeared in a Quebec journal : "Two young brothers, together with their cousin, Pierre, Louis and Toussaint Marin were stolen from home in 1845, their respective ages were six, five and four years ; that one of them was searching for his parents ; that if any one had heard of one Marin having lost children, he was respectfully requested to give information at the office of the journal." This insertion cost me a dollar. As soon as the news would be received it was to be sent to the parish priest ; I was to write to the curate and tell the place where he should address the reply. The answer came but without bringing satisfaction.

§ II

RICHMOND.

I remained in Quebec for three days only, being very impatient to visit Mr. Marin of Richmond. "I am sure that man is my uncle," I was about to say, "he must be the father of Pierre who died at sea; he will furnish me with a true account of my father who is his brother." I thought that I should have no more trouble in finding my parents after twenty-five years. I was then under the impression that Pierre was my second cousin, when in reality we were the sons of second cousins. I considered my success infallible.

Crossing over to Point Levis I set off, sometimes taking the highway, sometimes the railroad of the Grand Trunk.

One night, unable to obtain any lodging, I was obliged to take shelter in a barn where I sank up to the neck in a heap of straw, I was very cold. "No matter," I said, "a little patience. My uncle's house will be warm and I will have a good bed." Five days later, in the village of Richmond I knocked at the door of a small white house, south-west of the railroad. "Come in," replied a grey haired old man ; his aged wife sat near a stove rocking herself and knitting. I asked : "Are you Mr. Marin ?" — "Yes, my friend ; what can I do for you ?" —

"Have you lost a child ?" — "Alas, yes !" he replied, with a deep sigh. My blood rushed to my head and I almost fainted. "You are my uncle I cried with a voice of emotion, and rushed forward to embrace him. The old man deeply moved grasped my hand within both of his ; the old woman rose up in surprise and threw herself between us with tears in her eyes. I commenced to tell my story when the old man interrupted me : "I am sorry

for your sake at being obliged to say that I am not your uncle ; it was a little girl I lost not so long as twenty-five years ago." Big tears rolled down his cheeks. " Poor child," he added, " I pity you much and still more your parents. It will soon be sixteen years since I lost my little girl, and the misfortune is as clearly before me as if it took place but yesterday." The woman was almost choked with sobs and retired within.

" Remain with us for a while," said the old man, " and rest yourself, you can in the mean time relate the story of your life."

I was happy on receiving such a proposition, as my feet were yet full of blisters on account of the long journey. The old woman's salve offered much relief to my feet, and the warm sympathy of the good old people went to my heart.

§ III

ST. JOHNS

I remained three days in Richmond. One of the many neighbors who were accustomed to spend the evening at the little white house to hear the story of the *lost child*, said that he had known people named Marin at St. Johns Dorchester. I started for that place.

I followed the railroad as far as Belœil, and then took the road that leads along the Richelieu. Mr. Marin resided in the country a mile and a half from the church. I knocked at his house just as he was taking dinner with the rest of his family. "I have lost no children," he replied, "and you have proof before your eyes, by the presence of these twelve around the table. I know of no

such misfortune having befallen any of my relatives."

I resolved upon going to Montreal. I thought that in a large city it would be easier to obtain information. I walked the entire night on the side of the canal; in the morning I reached Chambly Basin, near which was an hotel kept by a woman. I asked her if she would be charitable to me. "No, I have no sympathy for young beggars. Get some work." — "Will you give me some work, Madam?" — "Yes, go into the yard and chop some wood." Fasting as I was, I found it hard to saw and chop. After half an hour, the woman called out: "Very well, friend, come and eat something." I found that I had reached the centre of a dense population, characterised by activity and business. In country places charity is extended without discrimination; in large cities however, and rich country places all must be paid for, eye for eye, tooth for tooth.

§ IV

MONTREAL.

I crossed from Longueuil to Montreal on a steamboat ; it was very cold, ice was formed about the docks and I heard that the boat would soon stop running.

For seven or eight days I traversed Montreal in every direction, now lodging in one end of the city now in another ; dining here, supping there ; my money was growing scarce very rapidly. I sought information from the police, merchants, hotel-keepers, passers-by, and the priests of Notre Dame church. After consulting the directory I was referred to a number of Marins residing on this and that street. None of them could

give me any information. When evening came I was tired running about and discouraged with my poor success. Montreal is a beautiful city, but I saw none of its monuments, public places or churches ; one single thought was before me, to find the Mr. Marin who had lost two children.

Meeting on the street a well dressed gentleman whom I took to be a lawyer ; I made my enquiry : " You should advertise in the papers ; follow me." I accompanied him to a newspaper office, and dictated a notice to one of the reporters. This done, he informed me that I would have an insertion in next day's edition. I handed a dollar in payment as in Quebec but it was refused. " Your story is too interesting, sir, we should pay you," the reporter said

§ V

ON THE ROAD TO OTTAWA.

I passed Bord - à - Plouffe, St. Martin, St. Eustache, St. Benoit, English Point, Carillon. It was cold and I was poorly clad ; I was obliged to knock at five or six doors before succeeding in obtaining a night's shelter. I became used to being called an idle, good for nothing, loafer ; though my old clothes, timid look and hanging head did little to deny reproach. Sometimes to gratify the people who desired to learn my story I remained two or three days in the same house. I was then enable to enjoy a good meal and a comfortable bed.

On my way I enquired about Marin.

I was told one evening : “ There is one of that name not far from here, on the road to Ottawa ; he keeps a hotel.” I forget the exact place where I was at the time, but think it was near Calumet ; a small mountain rose to the right. Three miles of the journey still remained ; a storm of snow and wind was raging ; I was unable to see a foot ahead. My progress was slow, my boots were full of holes and my feet almost frozen.

I entered the hotel covered with snow and found the master seated and quietly smoking his pipe. “ Are you Mr. Marin, sir ? ” I asked.—“ Yes, my name is Jean-Baptiste Marin, without any “ Mr.” to it.” — “ I too am called Marin, and engaged looking for my parents.” I had hardly begun the story of my abduction than he interrupted me with the words : “ I see the dodge. You are a man seeking free board. I do not want you to remain here.”

I sat on the gallery and sobbed ; my feet refused to carry me any farther. A lit-

the boy of seven years came up and said :
“ What are you crying for ? ” — “ Poor child,” I answered, “ you would cry if you had to bear what I have. When a child I was stolen from home, I have no mother, no father, no friend. Though my feet are frozen, I am thrown out of doors like a dog.”

The little fellow went and told this to his mother who was carrying a pail of milk from the barn. She spoke to her husband and the little boy returned to say : “ Come in, papa said so.” The woman placed a chair near the stove for me, helped me to take my boots off, then rubbed and dried my feet saying : “ The poor man must be in great pain.” I felt the woman’s kindness and asked God to reward her.

After supper we gathered around the stove, the man smoked his pipe while the woman had on either side of her two young boys, respectively seven and nine years of age. “ Where were you born ? ” asked the hotel-keeper.— “ I am unable

to say ; I was stolen at the age of five and have forgotten the name of my birth-place if I ever knew it." I then related my story from beginning to end. I was now obliged to halt a moment on account of the pain in my feet. The man listened in silence, whilst the woman would every now and then wipe away her tears with a table napkin. She then addressed her children : " Were you like this poor man, without father or mother, how unhappy you would be ! what would you do ! You have a good mother and do not listen to her."

The little boys wept hot tears, and many were shed that night in the house of Mr. Jean-Baptiste Marin.

On the withdrawal of the company for the night I stretched myself exhausted on the bed. The woman came to me after her husband retired and said : " Get up, young man, and follow me." I obeyed and took up my boots and stockings. I could scarcely walk, my feet were so swollen. She brought me to a room

over the kitchen where she had prepared a soft bed near the chimney. When I lay down she arranged the clothes about me as she would have done for a baby. For once since my abduction, I was the recipient of kind attention, and deeply did I feel it. "Would that she were my mother?" thought I, "she would be a kind one indeed. Perhaps mine is dead!... Perhaps she still laments her loss!... What a painful fate is mine!"

My feet ached the whole night. The following morning I breakfasted with them. The woman would willingly have kept me a few days more, but the man extended no invitation. I understood that it would be better to start. I thanked them for their kindness and left with a bursting heart. The woman's eyes were dim with tears while the two little fellows held me by the hand.

§ VI

GLOCESTER.

I soon reached Ottawa and spent two days in the Capital. The Houses of Parliament, the Cathedral with its grand proportions, the Chaudières and Rideau Falls offered but little interest. I was under the empire of a single idea. No one had any information to offer and I felt discouraged. I finally came across a gentleman who said : " There is certainly a person named Marin, residing at Glocester ; I think I have heard that he lost a child in a tragical manner, though I am not positive." — " How far is Glocester from here ? " — " About sixteen miles." — " Thanks, sir ; it is just noon, to-night I will sleep in Glocester."

Without any dinner, I immediately set out. I had hardly gone half way when I found myself on a hill far from any house. I felt sore or, rather, sick. I thought I would die. My legs tottered, my head reeled and everything grew yellow. I fainted.

On regaining consciousness I found myself lying in a vehicle and a kind man rubbing my face with snow. I gradually felt better but my legs were cold and my feet more icy than at first. "Who are you?" I was asked. "My name is Louis Marin." — "Where are you going?" — "To a Mr. Marin who, I am told, lives in Gloucester." — "It is so, he lives near by, I have to pass within fifteen acres of his house." The good Samaritan desired to bring me to the very door. "No, no," I replied, "you must not lengthen your road for me. Moreover a little walk will warm me up and do me good. Thanks, dear sir, but for you I should have perished."

I discovered Mr. Marin near the gable end of his house, his face covered with

coal dust, chopping some burnt stumps so plentiful on new lands. He was over sixty years of age. "Are you Mr. Marin, sir?"—"Yes, my name is Louis Marin." I almost choked. Louis was my name too. "Have you lost any children?"—"I have and have not. I had never a child of my own; but I raised a little orphan whom I loved as my own child; he was fatally crushed by the fall of a tree."—"Then you are not the person I am looking for. I am a lost child, stolen at the age of five years and am now running about the country in search of my father."—"Come in anyway. It is now night and you cannot sleep outside. You will tell me your story."

It was not difficult to persuade me. I got near the stove shivering with cold and my teeth chattering. The old woman gave me a basin of water to thaw my feet; pain turned my face into a thousand shapes.

The old kind woman questioned me much concerning my life and wished to

learn how I happened to come to her house. In reply I said that a man in Ottawa told me that her husband was my father ; and that her second neighbor where I stopped to warm myself together with others said that Mr. Marin must be my father, since I resembled him very much. The old woman seemed vexed and provoked. "True," she said, you greatly resemble him. We have had no family, but he has run about enough. He was a raftsman and travelled all his life."—"You should not endeavor," my good woman, "to condemn your husband as a mean man." The good natured fellow kept silence on the other side of the stove and laughed in his sleeve. "Come, friend," he said, "and let us have supper. You are not in a fit state to continue on your way, you will spend some days here and we will see how things will go." The old woman was offended and turned to pouting ; and grumbled in an undertone whilst washing the dishes."

We retired to bed about nine o'clock. I heard the old woman scolding the old man. "You have no sense! why do you house that stranger for nothing?" "You will never change," he replied, "you never can be charitable.—" "I can be such to the poor but not to the idle." "Who told you that man is lazy," he replied, "it is easy to see that he cannot walk. If you were in his place would you like to be thrown out of doors." — "Because he is your boy, that is the reason." The old fellow said nothing.

"I beg you not to quarrel over me. I can take shelter in the next house till my feet will allow me to continue on my way," said I.—"Be easy, friend," replied the old man; "it's a storm that will soon blow over. I have been subject to this for forty years; and am none the worse for it as you may see." The old woman remained quiet.

I prolonged my stay after my feet were healed helping the old man Marin to clear his land, cut down trees and

make them into lengths of eight to ten feet, pile them in heaps and burn them. On the return of spring, I helped to sow seed between the stumps and harrow the ground. The old woman had become better tempered and treated me as her own child.

I never went to church so often. Every two weeks a priest came to say his mass on Sunday in a neighboring house which filled the duty of a temporary chapel. As I could read, I read the responses from my book and served mass. My office of sacristan raised me in the opinion of the good people.

In the month of June I determined to resume my search. Two days before my departure, Mr. Marin was seated by the chimney place with his head buried in his hands, thinking. — “Why are you so deeply in thought,” I asked?—“Louis,” he replied, raising his head and looking me in the face, “why are you leaving us? are you not at home here? Stay with us; I am not rich, but your labor will not be

lost. I am old and childless, and I will give my lands to whoever will pay for the renting of them. Remain, who knows what may happen." I looked upon his proposal as very fine and generous, but not clear enough. "Thanks, Mr. Marin, I must not remain any longer. I have helped you to sow your seed as a slight recognition for your kindness in offering me shelter this winter when I was ill; but a secret voice within me commands me to seek my parents." — You are foolish," repeated the old woman, "you are losing your time and sacrificing your future; you would do better by attaching your service to some good person and gain something for your old days."

The old woman wept when I was starting; we had become perfectly reconciled. She embraced me saying, "A pleasant journey! good luck! remember the Blessed Virgin."

§ VII

WITH MR. LOGAN.

I started out on my road pondering over the words of the old man : “ You are doing wrong,” words which resounded in my ears for several hours. I began to think that he might have been right after all ; my parents could have been dead a long time ago, and then who was there who cared to give a thought to a poor orphan like myself. It was quite probable that the kidnapping of us did not create any very great sensation, and the news of it, perhaps, did not spread further than the limits of our parish. Three little children got lost in the woods, they died of hunger and were devoured by wolves. And there the excitement ended. It was

true that our mother must have wept bitterly over our death, but strangers soon forgot us. Evidently the memory of us had not lived during a quarter of a century and therefore was not fostered by the present generation. Here I was at the western borders of French Canada, while my parents might be living in the east, on the borders of the sea even. Decidedly, after so long a voyage, after so many fruitless efforts, my conscience should not reproach me; and I should not be considered wanting in filial piety if I stopped for a few moments to think about myself. I could not live forever the life of a vagabond.

At this moment a man drove along in a wagon. "Will you jump in my friend?" he asked. It was not necessary for him to repeat his kind request. He was an Englishman and spoke French very badly. While driving along the road he asked me if I could read and write and I answered him in the affirmative. "Would you like to teach my little boys?" he questi-

oned. "Yes, certainly," I replied. I grasped at the opportunity as a drowning man seizes a straw, for I considered it as a gift from Providence. This man proved to be a Mr. James Logan, a resident of Bell's Corner. While with him I had quite an easy life, having only three little lads to attend school. In the intervals between the classes, I harnessed up the horse, ran errands or took Madame Logan out for a drive. At the end of the year I found that my knowledge of Latin had given out. I was not experienced enough in caligraphy to allow them to make further progress and my limited knowledge of orthography prevented me from dragging them further into the study of grammar. At all events, I was satisfied that they had not lost their time, for in twelve months I had taught them to speak and read fluently. After the vacations the three of them left to attend the high school.

M. Logan had rented a first class hotel at Morrisburg and said to me: "If you wish to come with me, and take care

of the yard and horses, I will give you the same salary as you received for teaching school." I consented and followed him to Morrisburg, where I spent two years. My daily labor consisted in harnessing and unharnessing the horses of way-farers, and, four times a day, upon the arrival of trains, I had to go to the depot to get guests for the hotel. My salary was fixed at ten dollars a month, but the presents which I received from travellers brought me in more. "Where did all this money go?" Ah! that is more than I can tell. Nevertheless, I neither gambled nor drank hard liquor; but it is regrettable that I had not a father and mother to teach me economy from the day of my youth. M. Logan and his wife were Protestants. Frequently they spoke to me about religion and wanted me to attend their "meetings." Through curiosity I went to them twice, but did not like them. I was not at the time what one might call a fervent Catholic, yet I never went to sleep or rose in the morning

without saying my daily prayers. As if by instinct, I addressed my invocations to the Blessed Virgin, and I have no doubt that to this kind Mother is due the fact that I surmounted so many obstacles and difficulties. The thought of my parents kept continually recurring to me. During these three years of comparative rest, it followed me like a shadow and filled me with remorse. At night when I had retired to the privacy of my room, I could imagine I heard a voice saying to me : "Where is all your courage now ? Do you purpose living the life of a stranger in the world for ever ? Where are all your fine resolutions ? You allow yourself to become discouraged over the slightest obstacles. Try once more and be assured that success will crown your efforts."

My mind was at once made up and scarcely a day passed that I did not make inquiries among the travellers. One morning a gentleman said to me : " You wont have far to go, you will find a family named Marin at Castor or in its immediate

vicinity. My third year having finished in the month of June I bid Mr. Logan farewell and started once more on my search.

§ VIII

AT CASTOR.

AFTER a couple of days' walk, I found myself in front of the parish church of Castor. I lost no time in seeing the curate, knowing him to be one of the best informed in the village. "My friend," said he, "you certainly have been misinformed, for there is really no Mr. Marin in my parish." At this moment the beadle of the church, M. Onésime Langlois entered, and insisted upon taking me to his house, which was only a couple of acres away. I spent eight days under his

roof. Every evening the villagers around would assemble to hear my curious story ; they sympathized most feelingly with me in my affliction and I soon became lionized in the vicinity.

Finally one of the neighbors, who had never missed a single evening to come and see me, and who generally listened to me in silence, said to me in a solemn voice, "my poor friend, I pity you. You are only wasting your time running about the world and making yourself more unhappy. You appear to me to be a brave young fellow, settle down and you will succeed. If you wish to come and live with me I will treat you as one of my own children." His advice appeared to be a wise one and his frank and pleasing countenance touched my heart. "All right," I replied, "I will take you at your word. But I may tell you that beyond understanding how to harness a horse and harrow I know very little." "That's all right ; you are young and will learn."

This newly made friend was called

Mr. Pierre Sigouin. He had seven daughters, the eldest twenty years of age, the youngest six, but not a single son. I remained with him during the summer, the fall and the winter, nearly a year. I learned how to mow and trash the grain. He was a through gentleman, honest, always in good humor, and a regular and fervent attendant at church. Every evening we said prayers together ; every Sunday two carriages brought the family to church, and a month was never allowed to pass without each one of us going to confession and communion. Judging from the vagabond's life which I had led all my life it is not surprising that I was more a Catholic by name than by practice. While with Mr. Sigouin, however, light dawned upon me and there I contracted christian habits which I hope to retain till my death. I can never thank the Lord too much for throwing me among such a devout family. Of no place where I have been have I fostered such fond remembrances. But here is a little incident

which I cannot allow to pass untold. It happened on the first of April. Just as we were at breakfast, Mr. Langlois said to me : " Louis, will you do me a favor ? Yesterday I was in town with the curate and I left a new *tirepoke* and *hallepoke* at his house and which I would like you to call for. " What did you call them ? " I asked, " A *tirepoke* and a *hallepoke*. " I looked at him but there was not a smile on his face and I cast a scrutinising glance at the countenances around the table but every one bore a serious look. Then I thought they were some kind of instruments whose name I had not yet learned, for brought up as I was on sea there were numerous things on land that I knew nothing about. " All right " I finally said, " I will go with pleasure. " He gave me his little sleigh and his fine stout horse and I started off at a rapid rate. I reached the presbytery in the twinkling of an eye, leaving the dust flying on the road behind me. " Father, " I said, " I have come to get the *tirepoke* and *hallepoke* that belongs

to Mr. Langlois." Without giving me an answer he rushed into an adjoining room and I heard him laughing as though his sides would break. He returned almost immediately, however, with a solemn countenance. "It is true," he said, "Mr. Langlois did leave them here and it was a bad mistake for him to make. He has been forced to send his carriage, his horse and you also, who will lose half a day through his forgetfulness." "Oh! so far as I am concerned that does not make much difference; my time is not precious." The curate smiled kindly and I began to feel for poor M. Langlois, who had made such a great blunder.

The priest called in his housekeeper and they both wrapped up in newspapers three pieces of kindling wood fastening them with strings and then putting them in a bag, which I had brought with me. "Carry them very carefully" the curate said, "as they are easily broken." I started off holding the *tirepoke* between my two knees and I could hear them

roaring laughing after I had left. I was as innocent as a new born child and never suspected any thing. I experienced great difficulty in returning, The road was full of holes and ruts and the infuriated horse leaped over them at a gallop. He was very nearly running away ; my arms were sore holding him in, and at every jolt I was in fear that the *hallepoke* would be smashed to pieces. When I arrived the sweat was pouring off me and I was completely worn out. Imagine of my surprise, however, when I drove up to find the whole household, men, women and children, rush out of the house, carrying a pan and knives and forks to roast "the April fish." — "I had been made an April fool of." — I pretended that I was angry but in my heart I was contented. Such tricks, I said to myself, are only practised on friends.

One day I met a young man who prevailed upon me to go to la Blanche to work in the phosphate mines there and I left the house where I had been treated so

well. But there is a misfortunate hour in every one's existence and that hour had arrived for me. "You are doing wrong," Mr. Sigouin said to me, "here you live well, you sleep well, you are quiet and earn a good salary. Why then court misery and misfortune?" "You are right." I said, "but what would you have me do? The thought of one's parents after having slumbered for some time revives stronger than ever and follows me wherever I go. Who knows but by travelling around the country for work I may receive good news?" When leaving, Mr. Sigouin shook me warmly by the hand but said nothing; the little children held on to my coat tails; the mother and older daughters wept hot tears, but of all that little party I certainly cried the most and the bitterest.

§ IX

AT LA BLANCHE.

WE received employment from a man named Miller, who gave us a dollar and a half a day. "Can you cook?" the boss asked me. — "Yes," I replied, "I learned that when quite a youth, travelling about the sea." He gave me an apron, which was once white, and I was soon installed master of the kitchen. I had to prepare meals for about a score of men and naturally had very little time to myself; nevertheless my work was not so hard as that of the men who had to crush and load the ore. I was beginning to rejoice over my good fortune, when, fifteen days after my arrival, the

firm burst up. The laborers found themselves on the street, all without work, and many of them minus their pay. I was among the latter unfortunates.

I spent the rest of the summer in the vicinity, near the shore of lake Maskinongé, at the residence of a widow named Montreuil, who had no one to cultivate her land but a little boy and girl. While there I did the harvesting and ditching. As winter approached I tried to collect some money from the old woman but she denied that she owed me anything. I took out an action against her and lost; the agreement between us having been badly made. Fortunately my lawyer had taken up the case on the understanding that if he won he would receive half of what I obtained. I had not a cent to give him; my purse had been empty from the time that I left Mr. Sigouin's house. After I had lost my case, I walked aimlessly about the village, sad and dejected, until I met a young man: "Are you

still looking for your parents?" he asked. — "Yes," I replied. — "Did you see a Mr. Marin that lives in the upper Gattineau?" — "No. Is it far from here?" — "Thirty leagues." — "Thank you, sir. I will start to-morrow." When I thought that I had to travel ninety miles on foot in the snow and across the mountains I began to feel heartsore. "Bah! after all," I said to myself, "I will gain as much as I did this summer at any rate."

§ X

IN THE GATTINEAU.

IT took me three weeks to make those ninety miles. The roads were horribly bad, the snow drifts were as high in some places as the houses and the storm impeded my way at every corner. About noon I stopped at the door of Mr. Marin's

house and knocked. "Come in," said a voice within. — "Does Mr. Marin live here?" I asked. — "Yes, Marin is my name." — "Have you ever lost any children?" And as I asked the question I sank into a chair and the house seemed to turn around. — "You look pale, stranger, are you sick?" — "No," said I, "but I am greatly fatigued. It is very tiresome, I assure you, walking along the roads in this part of the country. The further north one goes also, the poorer the families seem to become. Last night I knocked at eight different doors, without receiving anything to eat, and at the ninth I was allowed to sleep in the barn." "Then you went to bed without any supper?" — "No, the lady of the house said they had no bread in the pantry, but that they were about to bake some. I waited until the dough was nearly cooked; then stealing around behind the oven in the darkness I secured a fresh warm cake which I devoured with avidity, on my bed of straw. I had not

made such a good meal for three weeks.”

“ Where are you wandering to now ? ”

— “ I am in search of my parents. My name is Marin and I was kidnapped at the age of five years. If you are my father, tell me so at once for I have marched a long distance to find you.”

“ I am certainly not your father. But I know a man named Marin, who keeps a hotel at the *portage* of la Lièvre, about six leagues north of Buckingham ; he may prove a relation of yours.” “ Alas ” said I to myself, “ how misfortunate I am. I will surely never own a foot of ground in this world.” “ My friend,” said Mr. Marin, “ you can remain here as long as you wish. The table is set, come in and have dinner. You will sup with us and sleep here to-night. In short rest yourself completely after your fatiguing journey.” I remained with this kind gentleman for nearly two days.

§ XI

AT THE PORTAGE OF LA LIÈVRE.

THREE weeks later, during the most vigorous portion of the winter season, toward the end of January, I arrived at the *portage* of La Lièvre, thoroughly worn out with fatigue. Night enveloped the forest in darkness but I perceived at intervals through the rapidly descending flakes of snow the lights of the hotel; then again I would be blinded by the drifting sheets of snow. I could hear plainly the angry voices of men as though a quarrel was going on within the hotel. I entered, and as I did so seven or eight travellers who were drinking at the bar, turned around sullenly and looked at me with brazen countenances. I shook like a

leaf. A big fellow, six feet tall with large shoulders, came toward me and asked in a gruff voice "What do you want?" "Is there a man named Marin living here?" "Yes, that's my name and I was never afraid of any man." I at once saw that they were all more or less intoxicated. "I also," I said, "am a Marin by name. I was kidnapped when I was five years old and am now looking for my parents." "You will not find them here. You are not the first to give me such yarns as this for the purpose of obtaining food and shelter. When a man asks me for charity for God's sake I give it to him, but when he attempts to impose upon me I just turn him out. My friend do you know how you came in. You can get out the same way." "Sir, but please think that nobody can live in such weather as prevails without." — "Go out, I tell you, go out." I did not move. He then sprang towards me, seized me with both hands and delivering me a severe kick, threw me down the gallery as if I had been a mitten.

For several minutes I lay on my side, unable to rise ; I could hear them within laughing, shouting, swearing and wrestling. Great God what a destiny was mine ! On rising I proceeded as best I could along the road leading to the bush ; I had three leagues to cover to reach the nearest house. Being afraid of wolves I imagined that each moment I could see balls of fire in the brushwood and I would stop and listen. All that I could hear was the moaning of the wind in the tall trees and from time to time the feeble echoes of the shouts and curses of the inebriated leaving the hotel. Discouraged, disheartened, the hair standing up on my head, I fell to the snow on my knees and said my prayers, " My God, my God ! " said I, " do not abandon me lest I perish alone in this forest and even the passers-by will not find my body as it will be covered up by the snow. " I had hardly struggled along three miles when I heard some noise from behind me. I stopped short and listened ; I soon heard the

jingling of silver bells and a few moments later a man drove up to me in a sleigh. I asked him if he would carry me a distance and he said "yes, jump on." Some six arpents further the road descended towards the river. Our horse was galloping, and before we knew where we were we found ourselves in the water. The strong current had eaten away the ice, nothing but snow remaining on the surface of the water. The horse and sleigh immediately disappeared, and the man and myself were struggling amidst the broken ice. The water was cold but not so much as one would have imagined. I felt my fingers were freezing as I placed them on the floating ice. Finally after a great struggle I succeeded in landing on the solid ice, and catching my companion by the hair I saved him also. It was high time, because he was very weak and about sinking. At this moment we heard another sleigh coming. I ran towards it and shouted out, "Do not pass here ; we have just lost our horse."

There were two horses attached to this sleigh. Unhitching the horses and taking them by a long circuit we reached the opposite shore. Then we pulled the sleigh over ourselves. During this time the man who had lost his horse was crying and running about pulling his hair and wanting to throw himself into the water. "Come on with us" said the man with the team, "it is useless to search any longer; the current has carried away everything. No doubt your misfortune is a great one but you should be happy that you saved your own life." We were on the road all night. I thought I would be frozen. From time to time we ran behind the sleigh to warm ourselves up. Our clothes were as stiff as shingles and it was with the greatest difficulty that we could get along. At six o'clock we entered the village of Buckingham. I thanked the teamster for having taken us along. The other man thanked me for having fished him out of the river, and both wished me all succes in my

researches. We parted after a hearty shake of the hand. A common danger and mutual services had made staunch friends of us in a few hours.

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§ XII

AT BUCKINGHAM.

I went straight to the presbytery ; the priest was just leaving it to say his mass. In a few words I told him of the accident which had befallen me during the night and I asked him for certain information. "It is well," said he, "go to the kitchen. They will give you a change of clothing; warm yourself, have your breakfast, and after mass we will talk over your affair."

About nine o'clock he called me into his office and submitted me to all kinds of questions and cross questions. I wanted to retire, saying "I cannot thus take up your time and abuse your patience," — "No, do not fear, all you say is interesting to me. Anyhow you cannot leave now seeing you have to wait until your clothes are dry, because," he added with a smile, "I am not giving you mine. After dinner if you are willing you may continue your journey ; until then you are my prisoner." He seemed to take a real interest in me. "There are certainly no Marins in Buckingham, though, perhaps, you may find some in Ripon ; that township is peopled by families hailing from different parishes in Canada. I will give you a letter of introduction to the curate of the locality." I was very much impressed with this kindness and when I was about to leave I fell upon my knees to thank him and to ask his blessing. Taking me by the arm, he bid me rise and embracing me said ; "You are a brave young man and

God will bless you. You will find your parents when you least expect it."

§ XIII

AT RIPON.

I then started for Ripon. "You will find your parents." These words sounded in my ears as the prediction of a prophet. This priest, it seemed to me, was inspired by God ; he spoke with such firmness and with such sincerity. In the belief that I would find my parents, I felt relieved and already rewarded for all my fatigues. With unshakeable hope I was waiting for an immediate realization of this promise ; it was to be realised, but to its fullest extent, *when I least expected it.*

I was proceeding along with a light heart but fatigued limbs. I had spent

the night without sleep, the accident which had happened to me, the cold I had endured, the different emotions which I had undergone, all this combined to weaken my strength. In the gloaming I wrapped at a small house where I asked for shelter for God's sake. "Yes," replied a young woman, "with pleasure, I will give you a bed but I cannot give you any thing to eat because there is nothing in the house." I walked up to the fireplace where a bright fire was burning. Five small children, the eldest 12 years old, surrounded it, all pale, lean and poorly dressed. It is impossible to be poorer than was this family ; in the sole apartment of the house there were neither tables, beds or chairs. The three youngest children, who were crying, were also saying "mamma I am hungry, mamma give me some bread." It was enough to break one's heart. I slept all the same on the rough floor. I awoke in the morning with a ravenous appetite. During the whole forenoon I was unable to find any

thing to eat. On my road, the houses were far apart and were log huts, as miserable as the one in which I had slept. At noon I was completely broken down. The trees were dancing before my eyes. I wrapped at the door of an English farmer's house which was comfortable looking. On entering I fell to the floor. The Englishman helped me to rise and asked me if I was sick. "I beleive," said I, "that I am weak in the stomach as I havenoteatenanything since noon yesterday. They gave me a good meal. "Now" said he "do you wish to lie down and rest?" I will do so if you please. I beleive a little rest will do me good" A bed was placed near the stove. I went to sleep immediatly. When I awoke it was dark. I felt better but not much stronger. "Will you allow me to pass the night under your roof?" said I, "Certainly, we turnnobody out especially when they are sick. French, English, Catholics Protestants, we are all brothers in Jesus-Christ." — "Thank you," I replied,

“ your charity strengthens me. ” God has his own every where.

For eight days I was the Englishman's guest. When I was better he said : “ I have some business at the house of one of my brothers ; will you come with me ? We will go around the lake of Ripon and you may perhaps learn something about your parents, without any miracle being effected.”—“ On the contrary,” said I, “it would be a great miracle.” We went around the lake and stopped at a dozen places but no Marins were to be found. I was not surprised ; I expected it. The following day I bid my benefactors farewell. “ Good bye, sir and madame, I owe you a great deal. I am going away cured in two ways ; here I found wisdom and health. ” -- “ How is that, what do you mean ? ” they asked. “ I have resolved to abandon forever my useless researches ” “ I think you do well ” — “ Good bye.” “ Good bye.”

CHAPTER VI.

I DECIDE TO SEARCH FOR MY PARENTS
NO MORE.

§ I.

RETURN OF THE PRODIGAL SON.

I proceeded, by way of Clarence, along the south shore of the Ottawa, reflecting as I went on the comfort enjoyed under the roof of kind Mr. Pierre Sigouin, and reproaching myself with the folly of having left him ! Castor is not very far off ; suppose I return and address him thus : dear sir ; I have been mistaken :

can I hope for forgiveness; will you receive me once more as one of your children? Perhaps he would reply: your mania to roam about the world will revive and you will start off again. In such a case I should try to convince him that my resolution differed from all preceding ones. Till now I had been hopefull and felt a desire to resume my search whenever a favorable opportunity presented itself. But weariness has seized upon me, I have become disheartened and disgusted. I know not what induced to look upon the curate of Buckingham's words as prophetic; they were nothing but the expression of a kind wish. The cold ducking I had experienced must have upset my ideas... No, my parents are dead or else they live far away from here. Evidently God does not desire I should find them; may His holy will be done! After all, I thank him for my liberty, the first of blessings. May His name be blessed.

Nevertheless I did not go to Castor;

I was ashamed. My clothes were in tatters, and I had no wish to return among the Sigouins in worse trim than I had left them. I worked for clothing for five months, and felt the time very long, first at Clarence in a saw mill, then at Costelman with a rich person who gave me the care of four stallions. Then I started newly clad from head to foot.

It was a beautiful summer day. I walked on with a light heart, serenaded by the joyful notes of the songsters in the trees. All the golden dreams of the past returned to memory ; I was then to live in peace and surrounded by friendship.

On perceiving the house from afar my heart almost broke with joy. My summons brought a stranger to the door. "Does Mr. Sigouin live here?" I asked.—"He did, but has left."—"Since when?"—"Since Spring."—"Why did he sell his land, he seemed to be getting on well?"—"Not having any son, and his health not being very good, he decided to give

up farming.” — “Where has he gone?” — “To Cornwall. His grand daughters work in a cotton factory, and he with his horse works at carting loads.” A pang of remorse shot through me. Had I remained, Mr. Sigouin would not have sold his land. I withdrew in sadness. It was noon. I went to Mr. Langlois who was glad to see me and begged me to stop with him till next morning. I thanked him for the kind invitation, promising to visit him again, and making known how soon I desired to reach my benefactor. I set out immediately after dinner.

One evening, I found much difficulty in obtaining shelter. I was warned at the first door I approached that there was small-pox in the house. The same announcement was made at each succeeding house. Grown impatient I knocked again, to hear the same story. “No matter, if you allow me to enter, I will remain,” I replied. — “You may come in.” When I saw the sick person, I grew

as cold as ice, the sight was so terrible. Great God, if I should become attacked, what parents would attend me!

The table was set and the master of the house invited me to be seated. "Thanks," I replied, "I am not very well, I fell more sleepy than hungry." He asked his wife to prepare a bed for me, but I said that I was more accustomed to lying on the ground with my coat for a pillow. After reciting my prayers with unusual devotion and begging God to preserve me from the small-pox, I stretched myself on the floor near the chimney place.

I rose at five in the morning and advancing towards the door on tiptoe and noiselessly opening it set off without as much as saying good day. How I enjoyed the clear, fresh air! Gaining a small wood, with the morning breeze floating around, I knelt down upon the dewy leaves and said my morning prayers. "Thanks, my God, for thy kindness. If I have at times been overcome with

sadness, you have also provided me with delicious moments." The thought of soon seeing Mr. Sigouin filled my heart with sentiments of gratitude.

§ II

MY FIRST TRIP TO CORNWALL.

IT was seven o'clock in the evening when I entered Cornwall as a stranger. Having been directed to Plamondon's Hotel, and my heart divided between hope and fear, I asked the hotel-keeper if he knew a Mr. Sigouin residing in the neighborhood. "I know a person bearing that name," he replied, "building a house for himself in the eastern portion of the city."—"Do you know where he

came from ? ” — “ From Castor. ” — “ He is exactly the man I am looking for. ” The hotel-keeper commissioned his young son to guide me to the place.

My summons at the door brought a little girl of twelve years, and, as she did not recognise me, I asked if her father was at home. “ Yes sir. ” Mr. Sigouin, as soon as he heard my voice came forth, and at sight of me, cried out : “ Here is Louis Marin, wife, Louis has come to see us. ” The woman soon followed to greet me. Then the daughters rushed in throwing their arms around my neck, whilst the youngest took possession of my lap. The entire family were as pleased as if a lost child or a brother had returned. “ Where have you come from ? ” asked Mrs. Sigouin. — “ From la Blanche, ” I replied, “ Gatineau, la Lièvre, Buckingham, Clarence, and twenty other places I have forgotten the names of. ” — “ You have roamed about like the wandering Jew. ” — “ Yes, and often without a cent in my pocket. ” —

“ You must have suffered a great deal.”
—“ More, dear woman, than I can tell.”
—“ Had you remained with us you would have been better off.” — “ I often regretted having left.” — “ When you went I often started from my sleep at night and woke my husband to say :
“ Perhaps poor Louis is sleeping out of doors to night, he so dislikes asking for shelter.” — “ Very true,” I added, “ I have more than once stretched myself beneath the stars, and more than once have I spent the day without a meal. Then I thought of you and said to myself : how foolish have I been to leave such a good place and such kind people.” These words brought tears to Mrs. Sigouin’s eyes ; then Mr. Sigouin followed by the rest of us, alternately laughed and cried. Mrs. Sigouin resumed : “ We warned you of what would happen, not indeed that we wished it to be so, for we had no reason to do so after the great help you afforded us whilst you were with us. “ Remain with us, now,

then," broke in Mr. Sigouin. — " I hope I may be able to do so. If I can get a place in the factory, I will go no farther than Cornwall and, if you will permit me, become your boarder." We chatted till after midnight. I never dreamt of the pleasure one feels on returning into the midst of a family one loves.

Next morning, Mr. Sigouin returned from the factory, saying : " I have obtained for you the work of minding a horse outside the mill ; you will have to pick off and card the residue of cotton remaining attached to the spindles, in order to manufacture a coarse material for bags. It is not very hard." The first day I was on trial, I feared very much that I should not do the work properly, but several times during the day, my foreman, Mr. Podus, would say : " I never had a boy who performed the work so well."

I retained this place, which I liked very well, for the space of fifteen months, till November 1878, during which time

I continued to lodge at the house of Mr. Sigouin. Then the factory reduced the number of hands, I was amongst those whose services were not needed, but was assured of obtaining work at the commencement of the Spring.

§ III

SOUTHWOOD.

FINDING myself out of work, I resolved to spend the winter in the forests of the state of New York, at a place called Southwood, about sixty miles south of Ogdensburg. Once more I left the good Mr. Sigouin, but this time our separation was not as painful as the first one as I promised to return. Alas! how little we know, even of the near future. It is well it is so, otherwise we would be

unable to bear the present trials as well as those to come.

I entered the employ of Mr. Hogware, and took charge of horses for Mr. John Jasmay. We passed by Prescott and Ogdensburg. At this latter place we stopped at the house of a Canadian. During our evening's conversation around the stove, I related my story and asked him if he was acquainted with any one called Marin. "No," he replied, "but I see many persons here from whom I can make enquiry. Call here on your return in the spring; I may have some news for you." These words revived my hopes. I was firmly decided against renewing any search for my parents, but would gladly receive any information concerning them.

We spent the winter drawing pine bark. It was collected during the summer, from the top of mountains, from vallies and from places almost inaccessible; and when snow covered the ground it was taken to the tanner.

I was almost losing my feet in those mountains as they were frozen for the third time. I hope it will be the last time. One of my sleighs ran into a stump, and in order to find what the matter was, I jumped out and discovered myself in fifteen inches of water. It took some time to return to the camp, which I reached during an intense frost, almost frozen. The overseer spoke of sending me to a neighboring village to be cared for. "I beg of you to keep me here," I exclaimed. "Where do you want me to go. I have neither parents nor friends in this country. I will be as little trouble as possible. I will pay you for your pains." They had pity on me and allowed me to remain. Three fourths of my wages remained in their hands. Thus you see I did not amass a great fortune.

At the commencement of March a great deal of rain fell and the men were sent off. I stopped according to promise at the hotel-keeper's of Ogdensburg ; he had much useless information to give.

§ IV

MY SECOND TRIP TO CORNWALL.

I resolved to make my return to Mr. Sigouin's a festive occasion. But alas! I found his corpse laid out and his funeral service set for the following day. My reappearance in the family caused the sobs and lamentations to be increased. This unexpected scene came upon me like a thunder bolt, and I remained stunned for months. In place of a kind friend, I found a piece of cold clay. Once more I became an orphan.

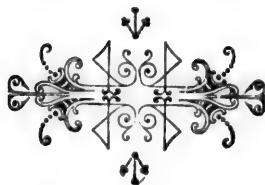
Mrs. Sigouin had become financially embarrassed. She was obliged to sell her house and together with her daughters had rented rooms elsewhere. I took lodging with a Mr. Robidoux, a kind

hearted person with whom I became acquainted on my first trip to Cornwall. Now and then I visited her whom I looked upon as a mother and those young girls whom I considered in the light of sisters. Our meeting was always a pleasant occasion, but the gaiety and careless tone of former days had died with the head of the family.

I remained two years and three months with Mr. Robidoux, constantly employed in the factory. Though I enjoyed the best of treatment, I grew sad and pensive ; my cheeks became sunken and my sight weak. Often, shut up in my small room, I passed the night without sleep. I no longer desired to search for my parents ; the idea had become disagreeable ; discouragement had taken possession of me. How many grand hopes had I entertained, how few did I realize ! I had roamed the earth all the days of my life in the form of a stranger, and during that time had enjoyed but two years of comfort and peace. Now

the death of an only friend had come to strike another blow.

I was about to attain the object of my search ; I felt certain of it ; but still I longed for the grave.



CHAPTER VII

FOUND AT LAST

§ I

A SURPRISE INDEED.

INCE the Spring there had been employed in the factory and boarding with me at the house of Mr. Robidoux a young girl, about twenty years of age, named Mathilde Gauthier; her parents resided in the parish of St. Raphaël, on the eighth concession of Lancaster; consequently not far from the

boundaries of the province of Quebec and the parish of St. Polycarpe. She listened to my story with much attention, often asking me to repeat this or that circumstance which she might have forgotten ; she seemed to be greatly interested.

In the month of August Miss Gauthier visited her father, Joseph Gauthier. She was asked if Mr. Robidoux had many boarders. "Six ; three girls and three men," was the answer. "One of them I can assure you deserves to be pitied. He was stolen away from home at the age of five years, together with a young brother and a second cousin, the former four and the latter six years of age. He has looked for his parents in every direction but without success. He has given up his search ; night often finds him alone in tears ; it is sad to see him." — "How old is he ?" — "About forty." — "From the story I should say that he might be the brother of Mrs. Isidore Hamelin, the daughter of Mr.

Hyacinthe Cholet, of St. Polycarpe.” — “Indeed,” continued the girl, “he resembles him very much.” — “Well,” added the mother to her children, “Mr. Isidore has gone in company with his wife to see his father-in-law, he will return to-morrow ; stop him when he is passing by.”

Mr. Hamelin lived on the same concession, about twenty acres distant. The day following he was returning at a brisk pace, when Madame Gauthier hastened to the road and called out : “One moment, Mr. Isidore, if you please.” After making enquiries concerning the people of Lower Canada, old Mr. Cholet and his wife, he replied that they were well. “You cannot guess, why I have stopped you,” said Mrs. Gauthier. “Have you not lost a little brother, Mrs. Hamelin ? I think I have heard so.” — “Alas ! not only one, but two with a second cousin. We have never heard of them since their disappearance.” Then Mrs. Gauthier repeated the story which her daughter

brought from Cornwall. "Indeed," replied Mrs. Hamelin, "the story agrees well with the abduction of my two little brothers. I greatly desire to see that young man, the more so that you say he resembles me. If my harvest were gathered, I would visit him immediately." — "If you wish," said Mrs. Gauthier, "my husband will bring him from Cornwall, when he brings Mathilde next week." — "Certainly, we will be very grateful for the favor." Mrs. Hamelin was transported with joy at this news, and Mrs. Gauthier was very proud of having been the first to communicate it.

II.

A GLEAM OF HOPE.

SOME days later, Mr. Gauthier reached the house of Mr. Robidoux, about noon, with his daughter. The month of September was just commencing. On entering he burst out : Where is the lost child ?"—“ At the factory.”—“ Will he soon return ? ”—“ In about an hour he will come to dinner ; why are you in such a hurry to see him ? ”—“ Well, we have found his parents.” I entered as these words were being uttered. “ Here he is ; ”—“ Say nothing to him ; I wish to effect a surprise.”

“ Hurry, Louis, hurry, ” exclaimed Mr. Robidoux. “ make haste to the table, I’m

going to tell your fortune out of the tea-cup. This language from a man ever so serious as Mr. Robidoux surprised me. "Hurry" said the other lodgers, "till Mr. Robidoux makes known where your parents are." I found them more merrier than usual, whilst Mrs. Robidoux walked about and dried her tears with a table napkin. "You are crying Mrs. Robidoux?" — "Yes," she replied, "I am crying with joy for you." I was sorely puzzled.

Hereupon Mr. Gauthier came out of the room and said : "My dear Sir, will you come with me? I will conduct you to your parents." — "Sir," I replied, "I thank your kind offer very much; but if my father be alive indeed, I think that he ought to look for me, since I have so long sought for him." — "You have grown very independant!" burst out all around me — "No, but I can scarcely believe that my parents are so near." "Never mind it is worth while making another attempt." — "I have too often

already been seduced from a good place by false appearances. I have an excellent position now ; I mean to keep it.”—“ You may go,” said Mr. Robidoux ; “ you will lose nothing by it, I promise. When you return you will find a warm spot, and I will speak to your master.” I was aware that Mr. Robidoux had much influence with the directors of the factory and my hesitation about leaving was quieted. “ Thanks,” I replied ; “ I will follow your advice and start.” I set out an hour later amid a shower of smiles, good wishes and high hopes.

§ III.

HOMEWARD.

MIDWAY on our route we put up at the house of Mrs. Robidoux's father and stopped for the night. The journey seemed interminable. I enquired about my old parents ; asked their age and their means of subsistence. Mr. Gauthier said : " Your real name is not Louis Marin, but Pierre Cholet, your father's name is Hyacinthe Cholet ; your cousin was called Pierre Doucet. " — " Indeed I remembered that one day on board ship we were told : " You will henceforth answer to the name of Pierre Marin, you to that of Louis Marin and you to that of Toussaint Marin. " — " Naturally enough, "

Mr. Gauthier remarked, "the villains wished to efface every trace of your origin; and as you were brought up on sea, they determined to call you Marin."—"That is the reason why all my searches have been a failure; I have been travelling under a false name."

About noon next day we reached the house of Mr. Hamelin. The residence was built on a small hill, a good way from the road. We left the waggon at a gate and walked up the hill on foot. When the youngsters perceived us they began to clap their hands and cry out: "Maman, here is Mr. Gauthier and uncle Polycarpe." Polycarpe is my youngest brother, we are about alike in stature and looks and have the same gait when walking. Without knowing it, these children of five and six years were quick at perceiving a resemblance in our appearance.

My sister on hearing my voice was so overcome that she almost fainted. My brother-in-law coming out said: "Please do not enter yet, my wife is not able to

bear any fresh emotion." He conducted us about an acre away from the house to a shady spot behind the barn, and then seated upon a pine log, I started my long story from the beginning. At first my audience only comprised Mr. Gauthier, Mr. Hamelin and his employee; soon after my sister arrived in company with a woman of the neighborhood; they remained inside the barn, but I could hear the sighs of exhaustion occasioned by their continued sobbing.

For two hours I spoke on. Mr. Hamelin said: "Your words, my friend, do not appear to be those of an imposter." Thereupon my sister rushed from the barn into my arms, exclaiming: "you are my brother, I thought so at first sight of you."—"Since you believe me to be your brother lead me to our parents, I will rely upon their judgement."—"With the greatest pleasure," added Mr. Hamelin, "but you must wait for some days. A portion of my grain has not been gathered, I must insure it against

rain before leaving.”—“Kind Sir ; take all the time necessary ; I will only be too happy to give you my help.

After thanking Mr. Gauthier for having brought me to the place, my brother-in-law said to him : “Since it was you who discovered him, you must accompany us to my father-in-law, otherwise the feast would not be complete.”—“Very well, when you are ready let me know ; I never miss a pleasant opportunity.” On returning from the field at the hour of repast, my sister did every thing to make me comfortable. She had never seen me but had often heard my mother speak of “that poor dead little Pierre.” She was now at the head of a fine young family, five boys and one girl. I took care not to mention my sufferings before her as they caused her to shed tears. Every night the neighboring farmers came to hear of my adventures ; amongst them was one of my uncles, Etienne St-Amand, my mother’s brother, married to a sister of Mr. St-Amand. Questions showered

from every side to which I endeavoured to reply as well as possible ; none doubted that I was the son of old Hyacinthe.

§ IV

HOME.

I set off on the fourth day about eight o'clock in the morning together with my sister and brother-in-law in the same carriage, in the direction of St-Polycarpe, where my father resided. On the way Mr. and Mrs. Gauthier, my uncle and my aunt, joined us. The three vehicles left a trail of dust behind as they advanced. A spirit of gaiety was in our midst ; the tone of our conversation, our holiday attire, the manes of our horses

floating on the breeze and the beautiful shafts of sun that descended about us proclaimed a happy hour. It seemed as if the laborers in the fields we passed stopped their toil for a moment to smile at our bliss.

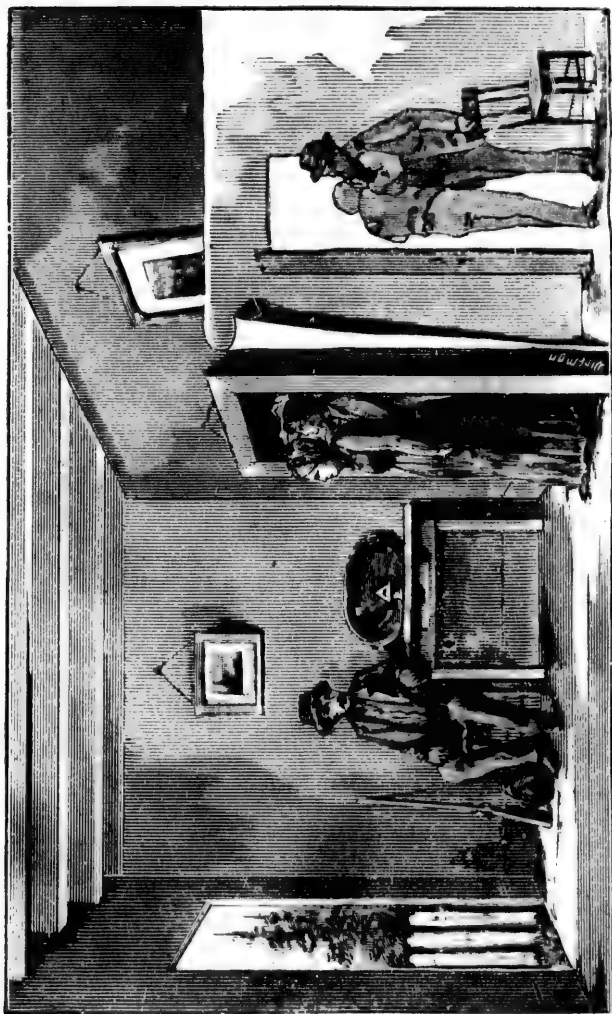
My uncle Latreille, drove in advance to notify our aged parents of our arrival, fearing that a sudden surprise might shock them. He reached them three hours before us.—“Hyacinthe,” said he, “your son whom you thought was lost for ever, has arrived.”—“Which boy?”—“Pierre, the older of the two you lost, he is thirty years of age!”—“What about the other?”—“He died, as did also little Cayen.” In few words my uncle related the story of my abduction, my desertion and my long searches. The aged couple were at first plunged into a state of mystification ; till at last conviction gained mastery by the sincere proclamation of Mr. Latreille who kept repeating : “ I tell you, Hyacinthe, your boy has returned, he is coming with Mr. Hamelin, a

few hours will bring him here." Then they were thrown into a transport of joy ; my mother shed tears whilst my father walked in hurried steps about the floor ; now they approached this window now that one to gaze out. "What keeps them?" they would ask each other, "they are very long in coming."

Mr. Gauthier said in referring to me : "tell him nothing so that we may see if he is able to recognise the place, when we come up to it." On arriving near the school house about seven or eight acres from my father's, I said : "Stop a moment ; I went to school here four or five times." They burst out laughing. "Do you think so? it has been rebuilt since."—"It is not the house it is the cross I recognise, I explained. It was blessed the year of my abduction. I remember when the parish priest spoke from a stump. It was a cross of cedar wood. Such and such a circumstance had slept in my memory ; now they revived as I approached the scene where

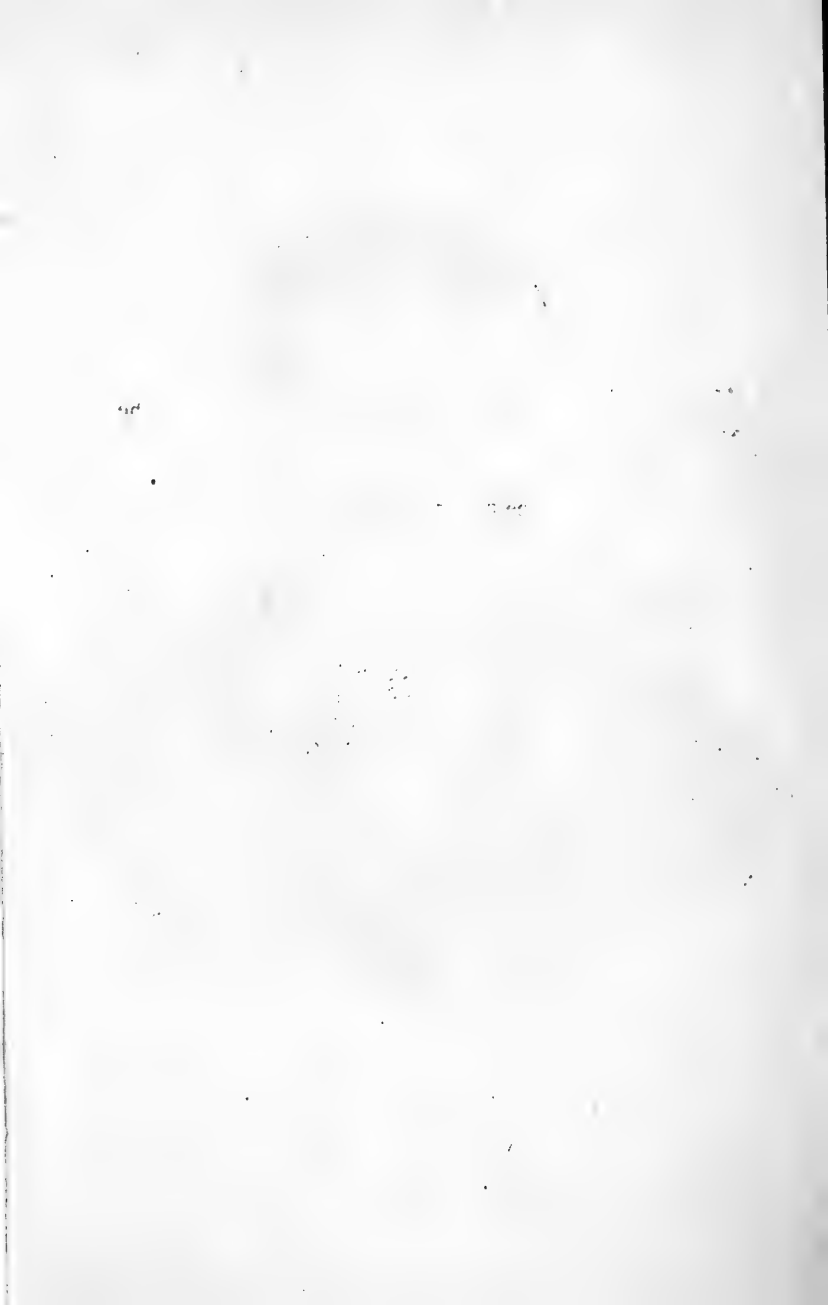
they had occurred. "True," replied my uncle St-Amand, "the cross was blessed about that time."

We arrived about five in the evening. Already the news of my return had spread around and some fifty people stood within or about the house. I refrained from entering until the horses were secured, being somewhat abashed at such a congregation of persons. I entered the kitchen door amid a dead silence and with every eye fixed upon me. I was confused. Some one placed a chair for me near a small table; I seated myself. My mother advanced and placing her two hands upon the table said in words broken by sobs: "Is it true... that you have... been stolen?" She then almost fainted, whilst several women led her to a sofa. I felt almost suffocated and was obliged to go outside. Cold water was brought and after bathing my face I felt better. My mother also grew stronger. This incident moved the whole assembly, the men



I sat near a small table ; my mother moved forward







Pierre Chalet

lowered their voices whilst the women burst into tears.

On entering the house I was conducted to the parlor. My father throwing his arms around my neck embraced me repeatedly. "Poor child!" said he "let us hear your story from beginning to end. All sat down; the house was packed, whilst the crowd kept increasing outside, heads were stretched inside the windows, every tongue was silent and every ear attentive. "Dear parents and relatives, it would be a pleasant task for me to relate my history seated here; but I am too greatly moved to find utterance." "Take your time," burst from every one. I spoke for two hours; now and then an interruption occasioned by the women's sobs afforded leisure to gain breath. My old father would then wind his arm about me and say: "And is it true, Pierre that you have come back?" My mother also, gazed up silently into my face; I seem to see her still devouring me with her eyes.

At eight o'clock we rose to take some rest. Every one exclaimed : " It is he, it is he. "—" Yes," added my father, " it is indeed my son over whom I have wept so long. "—" One moment " I said, " I am going to give a crowning proof of my identity, we bore certain marks upon us. Pierre Doucet had a small lump upon his head; Toussaint bore two small pox pits on his left temple; I have also two marks occasioned by small-pox on the right groin. "—" True" responded my mother. " He could not have divined these secrets. What greater proof can we ask? "—" I have no doubt, kind Providence has restored our child!" added my father. " God has shown his love for us to-day, let us express our thanks." On his invitation we bent down upon our knees and recited five decades of the beads.

§ V

AUTHENTIC VERIFICATION.

THE sun is not spotless ; the brightest day is not cloudless. In general every one believed me ; my brother only, with whom my parents resided, entertained some doubt. He often repeated to them : “ Do not be too credulous, perhaps you are dealing with a crafty knave who seeks an opportunity to rob you. ” These words threw them into a state of melancholy.

Fear nothing I said to my brother, I have not come to inconvenience anyone or exact a share of inheritance. All I beg is to call the authors of my life by the name of father and mother, since I

at length enjoy the pleasure of seeing them once more. My father kept silence and a certain uneasiness continued to reign amongst us.

After dinner the following day my father said : " Suppose we go together to the parish priest, to enquire what he thinks about the affair." — " Willingly," I replied, " take all the precautions you should ; it is an object of prudence for you, whilst I ardently desire my identification. As I speak the truth it will only become the more apparent the more my words are tested."

As we all three entered the priest's officè he provided us with chairs saying : " Well, Mr. Cholet, what news ? "—" The news I bring, Rev. Father, is the news of a great miracle. "—" What may that be "—" I have found my boy who was lost thirty years ago. Here he is." The curate listened to me for a long time and said : " I have no reason to doubt of the veracity of this good man, especially as he very much resembles you. You

might go to Mr. Lanthier and explain your trouble to him and firmly trust yourself to his decision.

Mr. Jacques Lanthier was member for the county of Soulanges in the federal chamber; he was a man of great experience and uncommon judgment and greatly esteemed. His wife called him from his yard where he was employed. He extended his hand on entering and said: "Good-day Messrs. Cholet." My father exclaimed: "How do you know this young man to be a Cholet?"—"How do I know?... but... I think I know all your children... from their family resemblance at least, if I am not acquainted with the christian name of each."—"So you think that this one bears a family resemblance?"—"To be sure I do. Do you tell me he is not one of your children."—"I do, but he is not the one you allude to I think." We then laid our case before him in all its details.

Meantime, Mrs. Lanthier, who had

overheard all, came out of the parlor and said : “ Are you one of the three little Marins of whom the papers spoke some years ago ? ” — “ Yes, Madame, Marin was then my name.” She took from a heap of newspapers a number dated several years back and read the advertisement I had inserted at Montreal. I was pleased at this incident, the paper confirmed one of my assertions as well as others.

After hearing all and weighing all, Mr. Lanthier expressed himself as follows : “ Mr. Cholet, are you satisfied ? It cannot be doubted that this young man is your son. Everything proclaims it ; his story, his age, his resemblance to you, the concealed marks which he has mentioned and the sincerity which mark his words.

If you do not consider him your son look for no other.” — “ Thanks Mr. Lanthier : ” — “ Since his arrival I have not doubted for one instant that God has wished to console me in my old age by the restoration of my son, but your

words reassure me. Come, my wife and let us enjoy our happiness."

We entered the church to thank God ; my parents for the return of a son after so long an absence, I for the joy of recovering a father and a mother. Gratitude dilates the heart ; we prayed for a long time without growing weary. The sun was sinking when happy, content and light-hearted we retraced our steps homeward. We could only say : how good God has been ! I added, it was certainly the blessed Virgin who guided me here. If you but knew how she has protected me in my numerous dangers. " As for me," added my mother, " since you started not a day has passed without offering up a prayer to her for my little lost ones." Thanks, my God, may your name be ever blessed.

§ VI

CONCLUSION.

PERHAPS the reader who has followed me till now may desire to know what has since become of me. I will satisfy his curiosity in a few words. I remained in my father's house for a month in such a state of happiness that I could scarcely realise. Each day on awaking I would say : another fine day ! I never tired conversing with my relatives and calling them by the sweet names of father and mother, sister and brother.

Unwilling to be a burden to them or appear idle I returned in the month of October to the factory in Cornwall. I was very much touched by the part

which the Robidoux family but especially by that which Mrs. Sigouin and her daughters took in my joy. Fifteen days later one of my brothers residing in Ogdenburg came to bring me to his place. As I mentioned before I had another brother and three sisters at that place. I spent the Autumn now with this one now with that receiving from each and everyone the most affectionate kindness. Among others, Justine, my godmother, did not wish me to leave.

On New Year's Day I returned home for the first time since the age of reason to ask the paternal blessing, enjoy the feast and receive my presents. Being on a visit to my brother-in-law, Hamelin, the curate of St-Raphael gave me the position of sexton. That same year of 1882 I renounced my title of bachelor to marry, a young girl of twenty two years named Anna Levac. The benediction of the God of Abraham descended upon my house ; we have a little daughter of fifteen months.

For three years I rang the bell of St-Raphael. Thinking I could do better, I entered the same position in St-Ann's at Prescott; but in this parish I received less pay. I left in the month of March to seek in the wide world something that offered greater remuneration. My wife spent the last year at St-Polycarpe at the house of one of my brothers.

My book is ended, but I still live on. If I endure like the other members of the family I still have many days before me. My mother is seventy years of age and can work like a young girl. In fine weather my father though eighty-eight walks to mass three miles. May God preserve for a long time those dear parents I had been deprived of for so many years.

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